

2/4 BATTALION.

HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT.



1914-1919.

*Southdown War
Sep 1. 15*

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DEDICATED

TO

Brigadier-General J. L. G. BURNETT, C.M.G., D.S.O.

Commanding 186th Infantry Brigade.

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OFFICERS ON THE BATTALION STRENGTH—12th DECEMBER, 1914.

Commanding	-	-	-	Lieut. Col. W. NAISH, T.D.
Second in Command	-	-	-	Major J. B. L. STILWELL, T.D.
Adjutant	-	-	-	Capt. J. I. BULLEY.
Quartermaster	-	-	-	Lieut. W. J. CLARK.

Captain H. F. NORTH.

Captain C. P. BULLEY.

Captain A. C. ASHMORE.

Captain B. R. GODDARD.

Lieutenant W. S. CAVE.

Lieutenant D. G. H. OSBORNE.

Lieutenant G. ELTON.

Lieutenant W. R. KIRBY.

Lieutenant F. W. SIMMONS.

Lieutenant R. C. DURNFORD.

Lieutenant F. H. C. BUTLER.

Lieutenant C. B. CAMM.

Lieutenant W. H. LEDGARD.

2nd Lieutenant A. F. HAMILTON

2nd Lieutenant J. A. de C. HAMILTON.

2nd Lieutenant J. G. WILKINSON.

2nd Lieutenant A. F. L. BACON.

2nd Lieutenant C. D. WYLES.

2nd Lieutenant H. F. SCOTT-STOKES.

2nd Lieutenant L. S. FORTESCUE.

2nd Lieutenant J. W. PIRIE.

ATTACHED FROM 6th BATTALION:—

Lieutenant C. L. R. JENSEN.

2nd Lieutenant A. F. A. FREEMAN.

2nd Lieutenant G. W. H. L. RAWLINGS.

Medical Officer: Lieut. A. H. EHRLICH.

CHAPTER I.

The 2/4th Hampshire Regiment started as an independent unit on the day when, in October 1914, the Battalion left the 1/4th Battalion on Salisbury Plain and proceeded to Winchester.

These were early days and people had not then grasped the magnitude of the war. Invasion was deemed a possibility, and it was with this idea that the battalion, under Colonel Naish, immediately on its arrival in Winchester, settled down to a course of what, in later years, was described as intensive training. The difficulties were the same as attended other units at that time, shortage of trained Officers and N.C.O.'s. and uniform, and a total absence of equipment and arms.

Matters slowly improved, and though equipment never materialised until the day before the departure for India, it was not long before the Battalion was issued with rifles of sorts, 50 per cent. of which, perhaps, could have been fired with safety.

The immediate result of the issue of arms was that at any moment routine was liable to interruption by a stand by order.

Then came the order for India, provided the Battalion could raise sufficient numbers. These were obtained by means of recruiting marches, and individual efforts on the part of members of the Battalion, and, on December 12th, 1914, the Battalion, reinforced by a draft of 125 men from the 6th Hampshires under Lieutenant C. L. R. Jensen, embarked for India on board H.T. Caledonia, the embarkation roll showing a strength of 30 Officers, and 756 other ranks.

The voyage lasted a month, two days' stay being made at Port Said and Bombay. The ship was crowded, as there was another battalion and half of a third on board. There had been no time to mark either rifles or equipment, and as the men were very young and inexperienced, kit and rifles disappeared in an alarming manner; the Battalion, however, was blessed with some excellent colour-sergeants and, thanks to their Pathan-like methods, the Battalion landed in India with their full equipment, in fact it was one rifle to the good, which led to a company commander being accused of having lost a man overboard.

The Battalion on disembarkation at Karachi on January 11th, 1915, were met by Captain E. W. Worrall, 2nd Somersetshire Light Infantry, and a party of N.C.O.'s, specially attached to the Battalion for the purposes of training, and to initiate it into the intricacies of the interior economy peculiar to a regiment quartered in India.

This party, assisted by other officers of the Somersetshire Light Infantry, were indefatigable in their efforts to increase the efficiency and comfort of the Battalion during the early part of its stay in that country. No one could have taken greater trouble, or performed his arduous task more conscientiously, than did Captain Worrall, and, when the time came for him to return to his own unit, the Battalion felt that they were losing a personal friend.

On arrival at Quetta, the Battalion was met by the G.O.C. Brigade, and no less than five bands, British and Indian, were waiting to play the Battalion to its new home.

The Battalion was at first on the eight company basis, and the company commanders were:—

(" A ")	Lieut. R. C. DURNFORD	(" E ")	Capt. H. F. NORTH
(" B ")	Lieut. W. R. KIRBY	(" F ")	Capt. C. P. BULLEY
(" C ")	Lieut. F. W. SIMMONS	(" G ")	Capt. B. R. GODDARD
(" D ")	Lieut. C. L. R. JENSEN	(" H ")	Capt. A. C. ASHMORE

No history of the Battalion would be complete which did not take account of the difficulties with which a company commander had to contend in those early days. The Battalion possessed few good N.C.O's, while the men were mostly recruits and unused to military discipline. Suddenly planted in a foreign country these officers had to adapt themselves to new conditions, and they showed themselves equal to the task.

The first camp was at Chasma Tangi where the training was chiefly in mountain warfare, and the whole Battalion soon became very fit. At the end of the hot weather the brigade camp was held at Gulistan, close to the Afghan frontier. Shortly after the return to Quetta, in October 1915, the Battalion was required to find a draft for the 1/4th Hampshire Regiment, in Mesopotamia. This draft, consisting of five officers and 230 other ranks, under Captain H. F. North, left India on October 18th after being inspected by Lieut.-Gen. Sir Malcolm Grover, K.C.B., G.O.C., 4th (Quetta) Division, who stated in his farewell speech that "he would follow their actions in the field with the keenest interest, even with affection." The Battalion was now compelled for a while to play the part of a draft finding unit and as such to retain a cadre of officers and N.C.O.'s for training purposes.

In April 1916, Lieut.-Col. W. Naish, T.D., was invalided to England; he had been with the Battalion since its formation and brought to its service a thorough and minute knowledge of barrack-square drill and discipline, which was invaluable to a Battalion which consisted so largely of recruits. The Battalion owes much to him for the services he rendered during its earlier days.

Lieut.-Col. Naish was succeeded in the command by Lieut.-Col. J. B. L. Stilwell, T.D., Major C. P. Bulley becoming second in command.

In the spring of 1916, the Battalion went into camp at the Brewery, Quetta. Brigade training was held in the autumn at Kolepur. During this camp, four more officers proceeded to Mesopotamia Captain D. G. H. Osborne, Captain R. C. Durnford, Lieut. A. F. A. Freeman and Lieut. J. G. Wilkinson, and a little later Lieut. J. de C. Hamilton.

It is noteworthy that within a month of leaving India Captain Durnford had won the D.S.O., and Lieut. Hamilton the M.C.

In April 1917, five more officers left the Battalion for Mesopotamia, and a further draft of 150 men was sent to the 2/5th Hampshire Regiment which was about to depart for an unknown destination. In the same month the Battalion was placed under orders for service overseas and it left Quetta on April 13th for Karachi, while "A" company, under Captain J. I. Bulley, were sent to Haidarabad, Sind.

During the period of the Battalion's stay in Quetta, 17 officers and more than 700 other ranks went to 1/4th Battalion in Mesopotamia, their places being taken by fresh drafts from home.

Whilst at Quetta the Battalion was very successful in the Station sports. In the season 1916-17 they won the Divisional Inter-Company Football Cup and the Divisional Battalion Cricket Cup, and reached the Final in the Divisional Football Cup. One or two really useful boxers were produced. The Battalion athletics owed much to the energy and enthusiasm of Captain W. R. Kirby.

Socially the Battalion took a great share in the life of the station; the officers produced two good pantomimes, and officers, N.C.O.'s and men assisted in many of the concerts and entertainments. The band became really first class, and was often requisitioned to play at Station gatherings. Buglers took gladly to fifes and assisted to enliven the route marches.

The literary side of the Battalion was represented by the "Tiger," a bright and cherry periodical, under the able editorship of Lieut. Godfrey Elton and others.

It is most difficult to express fully the gratitude of the Battalion for all those who had made its stay in Quetta so pleasant. In Sir Malcolm Grover and General Hardy they possessed keen and energetic commanders who, at the same time, realised the difficulties with which the Battalion was faced. Their interest and sympathy was unflinching and their friendship was manifested in ways too varied and numerous even to mention.

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OFFICERS ON THE BATTALION STRENGTH, 1st MAY, 1917.

Commanding	-	-	Lieut.-Col. J. B. L. STILWELL, T.D.
Second in Command	-	-	Major C. P. BULLEY.
Adjutant	-	-	Capt. A. F. L. BACON.
Quartermaster	-	-	Lieut. W. J. CLARK.

Captain J. I. BULLEY.

Captain B. R. GODDARD.

Captain A. C. ASHMORE.

Captain F. W. SIMMONS.

Captain W. R. KIRBY.

Lieutenant W. S. CAVE.

Lieutenant C. B. CAMM.

Lieutenant W. H. LEDGARD.

Lieutenant G. W. CAPES.

Lieutenant H. P. B. HOARE.

Lieutenant E. J. S. L. BROOKE.

Lieutenant F. W. BROOKS.

Lieutenant H. A. G. PHILLIMORE.

Lieutenant H. PRICE

Lieutenant P. S. SKUSE.

Lieutenant R. H. GOTELEE.

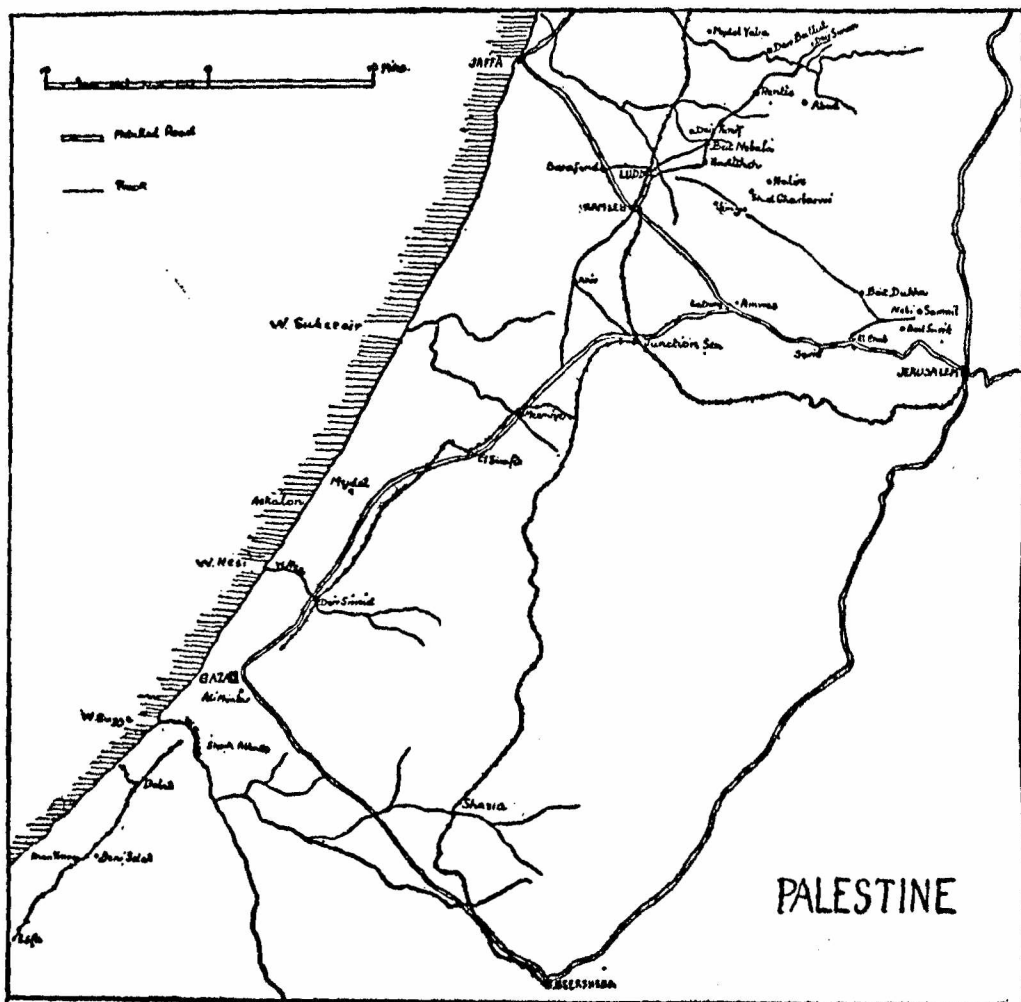
Lieutenant L. R. T. COWARD.

Lieutenant G. A. H. ALEXANDER.

Lieutenant J. SCOTT (Middlesex Regiment), attached.

Lieutenant J. KERSLAKE (Middlesex Regiment), attached.

Medical Officer : Capt. C. W. Jones, R.A.M.C.



CHAPTER II.

On April 29th, the Battalion sailed from Karachi in the H. T. Chenab, and landed at Suez on May 15th, the voyage having been uneventful.

A fortnight was spent in re-equipping and in training at Zeitun camp, Cairo, after which the Battalion proceeded to El Arish, Sinai, and a fortnight later moved on to Rafa, on the borders of Egypt and Palestine.

Here the Battalion remained for eight weeks, being brigaded with the 1/5th Somersetshire Light Infantry, the 3/3rd Gurkha Rifles, and the 230th Machine-Gun Company, in the 233rd Infantry Brigade, under the command of Brigadier-General the Hon. E. M. Colston, M.V.O., D.S.O., Captain A. J. Wright M.C., 1/4th Northampton Regiment, being Brigade Major. The Brigade was completed, at the end of the summer, by the addition of the 1/4th Wiltshire Regiment on their arrival from India.

This Brigade was included in the 75th Division, under the command of Major-General P. C. Palin, C.B., then being formed in Palestine,

The third Minden day spent away from England was passed under circumstances which did not allow of the usual festivities or decorations, but the P.R.I. managed to procure extra luxuries for dinner, and sports were held in the afternoon, in which the transport was prominent, and a concert was held at night.

Training was steadily carried on during this period, special attention being paid to bombing and Lewis gun training, in both of which forms of training, owing to the non-issue, in India, of the necessary equipment, the Battalion was deficient.

On August 16th the Battalion marched to Deir-el-Belah, the railhead for the forces investing Gaza. This march was a very severe test of the powers of the men ; owing to lack of transport, a very heavy load had to be carried on the man, which, combined with the heat, dust and shortage of water, caused many cases of falling out on the way.

The first position taken up was near the sea shore, about eight miles south of Gaza. Here bathing was indulged in, occasionally interrupted by long range fire from the Turks, who had good observation of the approaches to the beach.

On September 11th, the Battalion went into the line, taking over from 1/5th King's Own Scottish Borderers (52nd Division). Parties of officers and other ranks had already spent a week in this sector for instruction. The portion of trench system taken over was known as "Apex" (left); three companies held these trenches, "A" (Capt. J. I. Bulley), "B" (Capt. A. C. Ashmore), and "C" (Capt. F. W. Simmons). "D" company (Capt. W. R. Kirby) was in Battalion reserve throughout in the Wadi Naphthali, one of the branches of the Wadi Guzze.

The principal work of the Battalion whilst in this sector was to observe and report any enemy movement, especially in the area east and south-east, Gaza. With this latter end in view a regular system of patrol by night was instituted especially watching the Wadi Endless, a dry river bed running roughly parallel to the trenches, and the "Endless Road" a caravan route running towards Gaza from the south-east, passing into the hills near Ali-el-Muntar. These patrols were found principally from the reserve company and were under the command of 2/Lieuts. G. Hallam and R. P. Fenn.

The area was occasionally shelled by Turkish artillery from the series of redoubts and strongly fortified positions defending the town, but very few casualties were incurred.

During this period the only operation of any importance in which the Battalion took part, was the raid on a Turkish position known as the Old British Trenches which had been dug and lost during the second battle of Gaza. This raid was carried out on the night of October 7th, by the 1/5th Somersetshire Light Infantry supported by the 3/3rd Gurkha Rifles on the right, and a detachment of the 2/4th Hampshire Regiment, under 2/Lieut. R. P. Penn, and 2/Lieut. E. W. Beauchamp on the left. The raid was successful in obtaining its objects. The detachment of the Battalion came under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire and the retaliatory shell-fire put down by the Turks caused casualties amongst "A" company in support in Deakin's Dyke, several dug-outs being blown in.

On October 10th, the Battalion was relieved by the 1/4th Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (234th Brigade) and returned to the bivouac area at Apsley House for a few days, shortly afterwards taking up various positions in the line at Queen's Hill, Mansurah (East) and No. 6 Redoubt. On the night of October 29th, a very violent thunderstorm broke over the positions and caused very considerable damage in the Turkish lines.

Major B. E. T. Parsons and 2/Lieut. H. S. Weekes joined the Battalion on October 30th; Major Parsons took over the duties of second in command from Capt. C. P. Bulley, who assumed command of "D" company from this date.

The long expected advance began on October 30th, Beersheba falling on the 31st. From this date to November 5th, a very heavy bombardment of the defences of Gaza took place, monitors assisting from the sea. This bombardment, directed by observation from the air, was so effective that the Turkish artillery were unable to reply, and the Battalion lay in bivouac at Kurd Hill during these days without molestation.

On November 6th the final attack on Gaza took place, the Battalion being in Brigade reserve, "D" company occupying the trenches at Blazed Hill, when vacated by the 1/4th Wiltshires previous to the assault on Outpost Hill, the remaining companies, under Capts. A. C. Ashmore, and F. W. Simmons, being detailed as carrying and digging parties.

The enemy, frightened by the threat to his communication of the capture of Beersheba, and by the advance of the 20th Corps on his left, evacuated the town the same night. The Battalion left the trenches on the morning of the 7th and marched through Gaza without opposition, the town being completely deserted. Some shelling was encountered as Fryer's Hill was approached, the 1/4th Wiltshires incurring some casualties, but the rearguards of the Turkish army withdrew under cover of darkness.

The Battalion then moved to the north of Gaza on the road to Beit Hanum, formerly the enemy's railhead, and found an outpost line covering the Brigade front, and the next day moved to Australia Hill.

On November 9th, orders were received for the 75th Division to take part in the pursuit of the enemy ; all ranks considered unfit were left behind, and the Battalion joined in the general advance on November 10th.

The transport belonging to the Division had been lent to the 20th Corps for their attack on Beersheba, and only a limited amount was available, principally spare limbered G.S. wagons. This necessitated leaving behind everything except ammunition, rations, and water. The men advanced in fighting order, no overcoats, blankets or waterproof coats being carried. The lack of these was not felt during the march along the coastal plain, but it added in no small measure to the discomforts of the bad weather experienced as soon as the advance reached the Judæan hills especially as the men were dressed in thin Indian cotton kit, this being no protection against the rain and cold.

The general line of the first stage of this advance followed the Turkish railway north from Beit Hanum and the main road parallel to the railway through El-Mejdel, Julis and Es Suafir.

The Turkish army moved very rapidly north fighting rearguard actions daily, one such action holding up the advance at Mesmiyeh, but on November 13th the Battalion pushed through to that village in spite of considerable opposition from machine-guns.

The advance was continued, on the 14th to El-Mukheizim, on the 15th, to El-Kheimh and on the 16th to the important Junction Station in the Wadi-Surar, where the railway to Beersheba and Gaza branches from the Jaffa-Jerusalem line.

This week of marching, even though no serious action was fought, tried the men to the utmost. The great heat of the day, the cold at night, the roughness of the ground covered, the presence of flies and other pests, the extreme shortness of rations, and, above all, of water, combined to make the operations very exhausting. The men however had stood the test well and were in good spirits.

The Brigade remained covering Junction Station for two days, and the advance continued on the 19th. On the evening of this day, the Judæan hills, long in sight, were entered, and the country altered completely in character from the sandy plains of Philistia. The pass guarded by Latron was entered at dusk, but the enemy continued to dispute the possession of the covering heights. A halt was therefore made in the pass and the night was spent in great discomfort, owing to the heavy rain. The advance continued on the 20th, with frequent delays, owing to the repairs necessitated by the enemy having blown up the road in places.

At about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, orders were received to dislodge the enemy who were holding in force the village of Kuryet-el-Enab and the ridge of hills on either side. "A" and "B" companies formed up in a valley between the hills on the left of the road and commenced the attack. Immediately their movements were observed by the enemy, heavy rifle and machine-gun fire was brought to bear on the advancing waves. Great assistance was rendered by the arrival along the main road of two armoured cars, these

effectively dealing with strong enemy machine-gun fire, which was harassing the attack on the right flank. Progress was slow as the intervening ground was strewn with large boulders, and the ridges, which had to be taken before the village could be reached, were terraced with steep walls of rock and rendered slippery by the heavy rain.

A dense fog enveloped the scene as the attack neared its final objective, masking the enemy machine-gun fire and enabling the attack to drive the Turks out of the village at the point of the bayonet. Kuryet-el-Enab was reached by the main body in the evening. The Battalion bivouacked in pouring rain among olive groves near the monastery.

At 8 a.m. on the 21st enemy artillery opened on the bivouac positions and inflicted many casualties, "D" company losing two killed and 20 wounded in a few minutes and "C" company's administrative staff also suffering heavily.

The column then proceeded, under shell-fire, in a north-westerly direction, leaving Jerusalem on the right with the object of working round to cut the Nablus road to the north of the city at Bireh.

Late in the afternoon of the 21st, "D" company was detached from the Brigade and ordered to occupy the village of Beit Surik. Some intermittent rifle fire was encountered on the way, but the company went up the hill in good order, and the enemy did not wait for their arrival. "D" company remained in this village, which was an important position from its relation to the road by which our columns were advancing towards Jerusalem, for the night of the 21st.

At 8 p.m. orders were received to support the attack of the 234th Infantry Brigade on the ridge and Mosque of Neby Samwill, which is, strategically, the key to Jerusalem, a position which the enemy had no mind to give up or to allow our troops to occupy without a struggle.

The attack was completely successful; "A" and "C" companies under Major B. E. T. Parsons were soon established on a terrace about 150 yards from the Mosque, whilst "B" company and Battalion headquarters were stationed on a hill some two thousand yards in rear. The marching of the previous fortnight had left the men very exhausted, rations and water having been very short.

The enemy continued to shell the Mosque and hill during the night. No artillery support was available at this period as it had proved quite impossible to bring any guns except mountain artillery up into the hill country. At about 6 a.m. on the 22nd, the enemy fire became more intense, a battery of 5'9 being especially troublesome and causing a number of casualties. A heavy and determined attack by the enemy developed, and succeeded in getting very close to the position of the 234th Brigade. Throughout the morning, "C" company were employed in carrying ammunition to the forward position. At about 11.30 a.m. "B" company and Battalion headquarters moved to a small olive grove at the bottom of the hill. At noon the intensity of the enemy fire increased, a new battery opening from the direct rear causing about 30 casualties, including Capt. B. R. Goddard and F. W. Simmons slightly wounded. At 2 p.m. the 3/3rd Gurkha Rifles were driven from their position on the left of the Mosque and "B" company, supported by headquarters company, advanced gallantly and succeeded in restoring the situation, Capt. A. C. Ashmore and Capt. H. Price (adjutant) being especially noticeable in rallying small parties of Gurkhas.

At the same time, "A" and "C" companies moved into positions in close proximity to the Mosque. The enemy made repeated and determined attacks, our left company ("B") coming under heavy machine-gun fire from the village of El-Gib, distant about 700 yards on the flank. From 2 p.m. until dark, "A" and "C" companies maintained their positions in spite of extremely heavy gun fire which caused many casualties, including Capt. F. W. Simmons and 2/Lieut. E. W. Beauchamp (of whom the former was killed on the field and the latter died of his wounds that night), Capt. A. C. Ashmore and Lieuts. H. A. G. Phillimore, R. H. Gotelee and F. W. Brooks.

Capt. W. R. Kirby who was now commanding "C" company and Sergt. W. Thompson of "A" company, who was afterwards awarded the D.C.M., by example and leadership assisted materially in maintaining the position.

At 4-30 p.m. the 1/7th Scottish Rifles commenced to come up, their advent considerably easing the general situation; at 8 p.m. the relief began, the carrying out of which was considerably delayed owing to the Turks forcing the entrance to the orchard, where, there was a gap between "A" and "B" companies, and sniping and bomb-throwing from this point caused casualties. Private Papadopoulos of "C" company showed extraordinary gallantry in keeping down this fire with his Lewis gun. At midnight "A" "C" and headquarter companies were withdrawn to a wadi 1,200 yards in rear of Neby Samwil; "B" company under 2/Lieut. H. S. Weekes, who had throughout the action displayed the utmost gallantry, joining at dawn, having held an outpost line through the night in front of the Mosque.

2/Lieut. H. S. Weekes was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his gallantry on this occasion.

On the 23rd the Battalion remained in support, "D" company rejoining about 11.30 a.m. This company had remained at Beit Surik till the afternoon of the 22nd whence it marched, on being relieved, to Biddu where it bivouacked for the night. On resuming the march to rejoin the Battalion, the company came under heavy shell-fire in the valley leading to Nebi Samwil and suffered a considerable number of casualties. Throughout the day the Battalion was heavily shelled, about 40 casualties being sustained. Early in the morning the camel transport was very heavily shelled near Biddu; Capt. P. S. Skuse, the transport officer, rendered invaluable service in liberating the camels under heavy shell-fire, thereby saving a large number of the animals.

During these operations the casualties of the Battalion were—killed, 2 officers, 19 men; wounded, 7 officers, 132 men; missing, 5 men.

The Battalion left the support position at 3 a.m. on the 24th, and, after a long and tiring march reached the village of Beit Dukka, where the night was spent. Two steep hills north and east of the village were picketed by "B" and "D" companies.

On the 25th, the Battalion moved at 6 p.m. through Beit Anan and marched to Kuryet-el-Enab, passing troops of the 60th Division coming up.

On the 26th, the Battalion made a very long and exceedingly exhausting march to a bivouac area near Junction Station, where the night was spent. The next morning a short march was made to Akir, and the Battalion halted expecting to remain there for some length of time.

CHAPTER III.

The hope of a long rest at Akir proved false, as on the next day orders arrived for the Brigade to proceed to Ramleh, a march which was very trying owing to the sudden change from the cold and wet of the hills to the heat and dust of the plain. On arrival at Ramleh orders were received to proceed to Ludd, the burial place of St. George, the patron Saint of England, and the Battalion bivouacked in the orange groves for the night.

At length the long promised issue of winter clothing for the men arrived, including a remarkable garment known officially as "Bush Shorts." These, while not adding to the smartness of the Battalion's appearance, were a great improvement in comfort on the old and frayed garments which they replaced. As no arrangements had been made for re-equipping officers in warm clothing, each drew a set of man's clothing.

Owing to the heavy losses, it had been arranged that the Brigade should take over a comparatively quiet sector, and the Battalion proceeded to relieve the 1/5th Suffolk Regiment, which was occupying the hills facing Shilta and Midieh. Though the enemy was not supposed to be in force in this neighbourhood, the relief could not be effected until dusk afforded protection from his machine-guns, posted among the olive trees and in the villages round about, and only a very rapid inspection of the two hills on the right was possible in the failing light.

The relief of the outgoing Battalion was carried out by "B" and "C" companies, under Captains W. H. Ledgard and W. R. Kirby respectively. These companies, numbering together about 110 rifles, occupied the hill Sheik-el-Gharbawi, while "A" and "D" companies were posted on two hills to the right. One company of the 3/3rd Gurkhas was stationed in support near Battalion headquarters.

At about 2 a.m. the enemy made a demonstration against "D" company's position, and there was some rifle and machine-gun fire, but the attack was not pushed home, though the enemy approached near enough for Lieut. G. Hallam to bomb them with effect.

Enemy activity in front of Sheik-el-Gharbawi caused "B" and "C" companies to stand to about the same time, but here no attack developed. Intermittent machine gun fire was experienced by Battalion headquarters during the night.

Immediately after "stand-down," when the men on Sheik-el-Gharbawi had been withdrawn from the exposed forward slope of the hill, the enemy made a determined attack. "B" and "C" companies, however, re-occupied their battle positions with great gallantry, and by a steady rifle and Lewis-gun fire succeeded in beating off the attack and bringing the enemy's enveloping movement to a standstill, inflicting heavy casualties on them, more than fifty dead being found later in front of the position.

In this action they received very valuable aid from two platoons of the 3/3rd Gurkhas, employed to prolong the left, who were gallantly led by an officer who was very seriously wounded soon after he had brought up his men.

For the rest of the day the garrison of the hill held on under very trying conditions. They had no breakfast and were without water and food, for the very limited quantity of water which had been sent up the evening before sufficed only to furnish tea for the breakfast which, owing to the time of the attack, had not been issued.

Towards dusk the volume of the enemy's fire increased again, but was probably only intended to cover their withdrawal, and the night that followed was quiet. As it grew dark, "D" company, relieved earlier in the day by a company of the 3/3rd Gurkhas, arrived at Sheik-el-Gharbawi and took over "C" company's position. A little later "B" was relieved by "A," the relieved companies, by this time very weak, being withdrawn into support.

During the night the hill on the left front of Skeik-el-Gharbawi was occupied without opposition by the 1/4th Wiltshires, which effectively strengthened the line.

The action of Sheik-el-Gharbawi was a noteworthy performance by men who were all but exhausted before coming into action, and the greatest credit was due to the personal gallantry and fine leadership displayed by Captain W. R. Kirby.

During the remainder of the week no occurrence of note took place, but considerable machine-gun fire was experienced every evening between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m.

The strain on the men in the front line was considerable. "D" company was responsible for over 800 yards of front, and the total number of rifles available was 42. The only immediate support was the remnants of "C" company, who then numbered about 18 rifles. After the night positions had been taken up, the reserve remaining in the hands of the company commander consisted of one bomber, two cooks, two runners and the company clerk. The weather was very bad indeed, heavy rain falling almost incessantly.

On December 9th, the Battalion was relieved by the 2/5th Hampshire Regiment, and then marched through torrential rain to a bivouac at Ramleh which was reached about 10 p.m. Lieut.-Col. J. B. L. Stilwell left for hospital en route, Major B. E. T. Parsons assuming command. On the 10th, the bivouac area was changed to Surafend, on a high sandy ridge overlooking the Jaffa-Ramleh road.

At this date the strength of the Battalion was 9 officers and about 160 rifles. The other Battalions of the Brigade had suffered equal losses. The Battalion remained here till December 27th, being on three occasions bombed by Turkish aeroplanes in broad daylight.

Christmas Day was the wettest and coldest day experienced by the Battalion in Palestine, and, owing to the state of the roads, rations were very scanty; the situation, however, was relieved in some degree by the P.R.I. being able to obtain a large supply of the wine of the country.

On December 28th, the Battalion again went into the line in front of Beit Nebala, relieving the 1/5th Devon Regiment, and in this area spent a peaceful period of five weeks, the weather being very bad all the time.

The men were occupied during the whole period in strengthening the positions among the rocks, and in road-making. Patrols into No Man's Land, here about 5,000 yards in width, were of constant occurrence. On December 30th, 2/Lieutenants N. E. Smith, W. Brierley and S. D. Greenhalgh, with a draft of 42 other ranks, joined the Battalion from England, and a further draft of men arrived on January 28th.

On February 5th, 1918, the Battalion was relieved and came back to Haditkeh (Red House) in the vale of Sharon, where a considerable time was spent in training, and much road-making was accomplished. The equipment and stores which had been left at Gaza in November, prior to the advance, were at last brought up and distributed, and for the first time shrapnel helmets were issued. A number of officers joined, a Battalion mess was resumed, and a six-a-side football competition inaugurated, which was won by the officers' team. Capt. H. Price (who had been appointed Adjutant in succession to Capt. A. F. L. Bacon in September) and Lieut. H. P. B. Hoare left the Battalion on appointment to the Indian Army. Capt. W. G. Newland was appointed Adjutant in succession to Capt. H. Price.

* * * *

CHAPTER IV.

The rainy season was now over, railhead had been brought up to Ludd, and preparations were made for a further advance from the line which the lack of communications had fixed since the end of December. On March 11th, the Battalion moved into Corps reserve at Deir Tureif, and the Battalion mess was again broken up, preparatory to a period of movement. The advance began on the 12th, the 54th Division storming Mejdal Yaba under a heavy artillery concentration.

On the 13th, the Battalion moved to a bivouac area near Rentis, and was employed in road-making under the Royal Engineers in the Wadi Ballut. Two men were injured by falling rock during the progress of the blasting operations. On the 16th, orders were received to take over from the 2/5th Hampshires on Deir Kulah, the most advanced post at the moment in our hands. Owing to a sudden and unexpected recurrence of wet weather this move was delayed, and it was not until the 18th that the relief was carried out. On March 20th, a shell pitched into the headquarters of "C" company wounding 2/Lieutenants Downer and Dixon, Co. Sergt.-Major Willows, Sergt. Arnold and seven men. Great difficulty was experienced in getting the casualties down the side of the hill, as the slope was so steep and rough that only great care on the part of the bearers enabled the stretchers to be carried down without an upset.

On March 24th, Palm Sunday, members of the Machine-Gun Company under Lieut. Street, M.G.C., assisted by some men of "B" company, spent five hours after dark trying to bring in a wounded German who was lying on their right in front of the 3/3rd Gurkha's line. It was found that both his thighs were broken, and it was after midnight before he was made as comfortable as circumstances permitted, and left in the only tent in possession of the Battalion for the remainder of the night. This was the first occasion that an actual German had been met by the Battalion, though information of their presence on the Palestine front had been received some time previously.

Orders were received on March 27th for a rectification of the line, and "A", "C" and "D" companies moved to Deir Siman, "B" company remaining in support on Deir Kulah. Owing to the hilly nature of the country over which this advance of less than 1,000 yards took place, it was six hours before the last platoon was reported in position 2/Lieut. F. W. Holbrook was wounded in the arm by a sniper whilst reconnoitring the hill with a small patrol previous to the arrival of his company. The enemy put down a heavy barrage during the night on the wadi between Deir Siman and Deir Kulah, but by hugging the reverse side of the slopes and keeping close under the ledges, casualties were in a large measure avoided.

The hill was held by a succession of small posts, pushed at night down the forward slope, and these came under continual sniping and bombing from the enemy. On one occasion the enemy used the ruse of speaking English to get near the posts.

The rearward slopes on which the men bivouacked during the day were subjected to continual harassing fire but the excellent cover provided by the boulders behind which the men lay minimised the casualties.

On Easter Day, March 31st, the enemy made an attack on "A" company's position, but this was repulsed without difficulty.

On April 5th, Lieut.-Col. J. B. L. Stilwell was compelled to go to hospital and Captain C. P. Bulley took over the command of the battalion, owing to Major Parsons being away.

Orders were issued on April 7th for an attack on the ridge, Sheik Subih, distant about 2,500 yards from the starting point. During the night, April 8th-9th, the Battalion concentrated behind Gurkha Hill in readiness to advance, as soon as the 1/5th Somersetshire Light Infantry had taken the village of Rafat, and the 232nd Brigade had occupied El Kefr and Berukin.

These attacks, which were timed to be completed by 7 a.m., were held up till the afternoon, and it was decided to wait till the morning to continue the advance. At 6 a.m. on the 10th, the 3/3rd Gurkhas, who were to occupy a ridge which covered the Wadi Lehham, across which lay the final objective of the Brigade, advanced to the attack. The hillmen managed to occupy the east end of the ridge, but were held up by a hitherto unsuspected redoubt on the western extremity, which was immediately named the Pimple. In spite of this, an attempt was made to carry out the original scheme of the attack, and "A" and "D" companies commenced to advance. As soon as the leading waves crested the hill they came under heavy machine-gun fire and a barrage of high explosive shells, and it was impossible to proceed. An attempt was made to blanket the Pimple with shell-fire, but, owing to the difficulties of locating the exact spot, this had to be given up, as a large proportion of the shells were falling amongst the Gurkhas who were clinging with great difficulty to the other end of the hill.

On the night of the 9th-10th a party of Gurkhas consisting of six British officers and 250 men attempted to rush the Pimple under cover of darkness, but the attempt failed, only one Gurkha officer, and 25 men returning.

Information was then received that the enemy had received large reinforcements, and the attack was broken off.

During these operations, Lieutenants Hallam, Brierley and Aitchison, and 37 other ranks were wounded several of whom died of wounds later. The small number of casualties incurred was due to the excellent cover afforded by the boulders which gave entire protection except when a movement was attempted.

It is of interest to note that the Pimple remained in Turkish hands until the final débacle in September, 1918.

On April 15th the Battalion moved to the Wadi Arak and, on the 16th, relieved the 58th Rifles on Hill 1249, headquarters and two companies remaining in support in the wadi; the Battalion remained in this position for a fortnight; a few casualties occurred in this period, the enemy shelling intermittently, chiefly with minenwerfer. Companies relieved one another at short intervals, and a certain amount of wire was put out round the positions during the night.

Major B. E. T. Parsons returned from Egypt on April 20th and assumed command of the Battalion. On Saturday April 27th the Battalion was relieved in the Wadi Arak by the 3/3rd Gurkhas and the 1/5th Somersetshires. Some shelling was experienced whilst waiting to move, but no casualties occurred, and the Battalion moved to the Wadi Ballut and bivouacked there. Sunday was spent in that place, the men

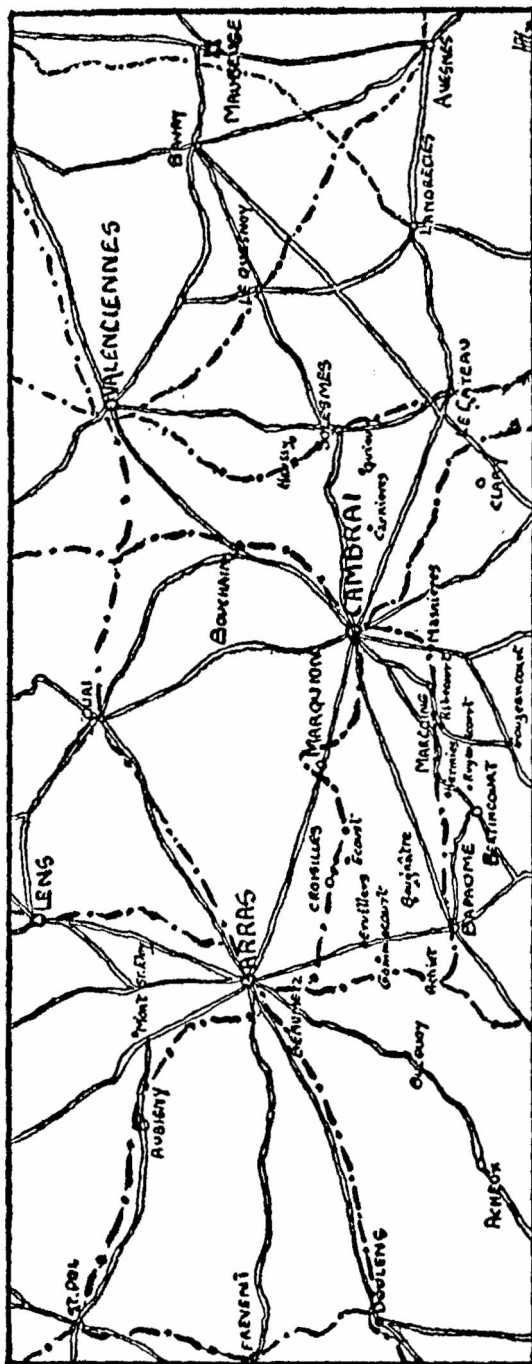
obtaining a much needed rest and bathe. On the following day, the equipment and transport were handed over to the 29th Punjabis, and the Battalion moved to Rentis. The General Officer Commanding the Division bade the Battalion farewell, and expressed his certainty that the name which had been won in the 75th Division would be maintained in the new area to which the Battalion was proceeding.

On successive days the Battalion moved to Haditheh and thence to Surafend by march route, and entrained at Ludd on May 2nd, arriving early on the 3rd at Kantara, where training was carried out till May 22nd, short leave to Cairo being granted to a proportion of all ranks. On the 22nd, the Battalion proceeded by train to Alexandria, and at once embarked on H.M.T. 'Kaiser-i-Hind,' remaining in harbour until the 26th, when the convoy put to sea.

The total casualties incurred by the Battalion during the Palestine Campaign were 2 officers and 33 men killed, 13 officers and 188 men wounded and 5 men missing. The loss of Capt. F. W. Simmons, who died most gallantly in action at Nebi Samwil, was keenly regretted by all ranks. The Battalion lost in him a splendid soldier, an invaluable company commander, and a friend who was admired and respected by all who knew him. 2/Lieut. E. W. Beauchamp, who died of wounds received at Nebi Samwil, had only served with the Battalion since July, having been attached from his own regiment, the Dorsets, but in that short period his comrades had learned to know him as a gallant soldier, a very capable subaltern, and a cheerful and unselfish companion. Capt. J. I. Bulley, Capt. B. R. Goddard, Capt. A. C. Ashmore, Capt. W. R. Kirby, Lieut. G. Hallam and Lieut. Downer were among those who, owing to wounds or ill health, were unable to accompany the Battalion when it left Egypt.

Thus ended the service of the Battalion with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, a year after landing in Egypt from India. During that year the Battalion had taken its full share in operations of a momentous and trying nature, culminating in the fall of Gaza and the entry into Jerusalem, a campaign not only of local success, but one which was destined to have a far reaching effect on the course of the War.

In the trenches before Gaza in September and October, in the heavy fighting of the operations in November 1917, the long and exhausting march into Judæa, above all, in the desperate fighting at Nebi Samwil and in the hill fighting and inclement weather of the Judæan winter, the Battalion may be said to have found itself and proved itself a fighting unit of tried capacity. It had made and maintained a good reputation and all ranks left the Egyptian Expeditionary Force for other and unknown duties with a measure of self-confidence and esprit-de-corps which was to prove, subsequently, of the utmost value. If the Battalion received in the opinion of many less than its due share of honours and awards for the Jerusalem campaign, it had won what was of greater importance, a feeling of confidence between officers and men, and a training under the stress of war that led to the complete success attained in the advance of 1918.



HONOURS AND AWARDS

PALESTINE.

MILITARY CROSS.

Lieut. E. J. S. L. BROOKE (While serving with 233rd Brigade H.Q.).

CROIX DE GUERRE.

2nd/Lieut. H. S. WEEKES.

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

200037 Sergt. W. THOMPSON.

201766 Pte. R. J. THOMAS.

MILITARY MEDAL.

201373 Pte. C. GODDARD.

202832 Pte. W. J. WYATT.

202642 Pte. N. G. PAPADOPOULOS.

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES, JUNE 1918.

Captain B. R. GODDARD.

Captain W. R. KIRBY.

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CASUALTIES IN PALESTINE.

	KILLED.				WOUNDED.				MISSING.				
	OFFICERS.		O.R.		OFFICERS.		O.R.		O.R.				
Operations up to, and including, Neby Samwil	2	...	...	20	...	...	7	...	...	135	...	...	5
Skeik-el-Glarbarwy	...	...	...	9	...	...	—	...	...	13	...	...	—
Wadi Arak	—	...	...	4	...	...	6	...	...	40	...	...	—
	2			33			13			188			5

CHAPTER V.

FRANCE.

MARSEILLES. BUCQUOY. HENU.

JUNE, 1918.

The Hired Transport 'Kaisar-i-Hind,' conveying the battalion and other units from the Egyptian Expeditionary Force for service in France, put to sea on Sunday, May 26th, 1918. The battalion often seemed to be fated to begin a new enterprise on a Sunday. The U-boat alarm was fairly constant at that time, and on one occasion all ranks were turned out at night, in time to see one ship of the convoy beginning to sink. This was 'H.M.T. Leasowe Castle,' on board of which were two officers, 2/Lieut. J. Hart and 2/Lieut. L. H. Lainé, both of whom escaped with their lives and joined the battalion again later in the year.

On June 1st, the 'Kaisar-i-Hind' reached Marseilles where the battalion spent 36 hours, officially at least in No. 10 Rest Camp, and entrained on June 2nd. The train journey was not much appreciated and nobody was sorry to detrain at Doullens on June 5th and proceed to camp at Amplier.

The companies were commanded as follows:—"A" by Capt. W. S. Cave (succeeded on June 19th by 2/Lieut. R. P. Fenn), "B" by Capt. H. C. B. Cottam; "C" by 2/Lieut. J. F. Bennett; "D" by Capt. C. P. Bulley (subsequently by 2/Lieut. N. E. Smith).

OFFICERS SERVING WITH THE BATTALION ON ARRIVAL AT DOULLENS.

4th, JUNE 1918.

Commanding Officer	-	-	Lieut.-Col. J. B. L. STILWELL
Second in Command	-	-	Major B. E. T. PARSONS
Adjutant	-	-	Capt. W. G. NEWLAND
Assistant-Adjutant	-	-	Capt. A. F. L. BACON
Transport Officer	-	-	Capt. P. S. SKUSE
Signal Officer	-	-	Lieut. L. R. T. COWARD
Intelligence Officer	-	-	2/Lieut. S. D. GREENHALGH
Assistant Intelligence Officer	-	-	2/Lieut. E. H. WORKMAN
A/Quartermaster	-	-	Lieut. A. SCOTT

"A" Company.

Capt. W. S. CAVE
2/Lieut. R. P. FENN
2/Lieut. W. BRIERLEY
2/Lieut. F. C. HOLBROOK
2/Lieut. H. BRYANT

"B" Company.

Lieut. G. W. CAPES
2/Lieut. H. C. B. COTTAM
2/Lieut. R. O. CLAPCOTT
2/Lieut. C. B. RICHMOND
2/Lieut. H. S. WEEKES

"C" Company.

Capt. W. H. LEDGARD
Lieut. J. F. BENNETT
2/Lieut. F. C. ISAACS
2/Lieut. C. F. WILSON
2/Lieut. T. JOHNSON

"D" Company.

Capt. C. P. BULLEY
2/Lieut. N. E. SMITH
2/Lieut. S. W. O. DIXON
2/Lieut. H. J. DRAKE
2/Lieut. H. L. WILLISHER

From this point the history of the battalion is bound up with that of the 62nd (West Riding) Division, composed entirely, until the arrival of the troops from Palestine, of Yorkshire units.

The Division had already a glorious name, but the battalion was confident in its power to maintain the credit of the past and right royally was that confidence fulfilled. It is now known that those who were to be the future comrades of the battalion were filled with admiration at their appearance. The men were of good physique, and as they marched in with tanned faces, brown bare knees and a carriage that stamped them as soldiers, it was felt that added strength had come to the Division.

On June 6th, the battalion was inspected by Major-Gen. Sir W. P. Braithwaite, K.C.B., commanding the Division, and was welcomed by Brigadier-General J. L. G. Burnett, C.M.G., D.S.O., commanding the 186th Infantry Brigade, which comprised the 5th and 2/4th battalions, The Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment.

It may not be out of order here to state that from June 6th, 1918, to February 23rd, 1919, when the battalion, to its keen regret, had to part company with the 186th Infantry Brigade, the greatest consideration was shown by the Brigadier and his Staff. All ranks quickly learnt to take a real pride in belonging to such a Brigade, and to appreciate the confidence which, as soon appeared, was felt by the General Officer Commanding in the battalion.

On June 8th and 11th respectively, parties of officers and other ranks proceeded to the trenches in the Bucquoy area for instruction with units of the Brigade, to whom this opportunity may be taken of acknowledging with gratitude the kindness and hospitality shown to all ranks.

On the 15th the battalion moved up and relieved the 2/7th West Riding Regiment as battalion in support on the right of the Brigade area.

On the 16th, owing to alterations in the Brigade scheme of defence, new support positions were taken up, battalion headquarters being located in Pigeon Wood.

A further move was made on the following day, "A" and "C" companies relieving two companies of the 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment, the remainder of the battalion completing the relief on the 18th.

Although many officers and men had had individual experience of service in France, this week gave the battalion, as a whole, the first experience in trench warfare on the Western front. The sector the battalion was to hold was one of difficulty and anxiety; the general situation was still very serious, and all the time there were rumours of an impending Boche offensive in this particular sector.

It was with these thoughts that the battalion went into Bucquoy. Fortunately few casualties were incurred during this tour, and the experience gained in this nerve-trying village was of great value. Those who were seeing the battalion for the first time realised that in both nerve and courage the battalion lacked nothing.

The sector taken up was held until June 24th, when the battalion was relieved by the 10th Royal Fusiliers, and proceeded to a canvas camp at Henu, near Souastre.

The battalion remained here for about three weeks, which proved a very pleasant time on the whole ; training of all sorts was carried out, a rifle range in the vicinity of the camp largely used, and especial attention was devoted to new schemes of attack, demonstrations being given before the General Officer Commanding the Brigade. Ample time was allowed for sport, especially for cricket, and representatives of the battalion did well at the Brigade athletic meeting on July 9th. Special reference must be made here to a really splendid effort which won the inter-battalion tug-of-war. This period of rest and training stood the men in good stead in the very trying time that was coming.

On July 14th, Lieut.-Colonel F. Brook, D.S.O., M.C., 4th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry assumed command of the battalion, Lieut. Colonel J. B. L. Stilwell having proceeded home on leave a little earlier.

Lieut. Colonel Brook remained in command of the battalion throughout all the subsequent operations. It may perhaps be permissible here to express what very soon became the conviction of all ranks, that the battalion was exceptionally fortunate in its commanding officer, who won the respect and affection of officers and men in a very short time.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE MARNE.

THE ARDRE VALLEY.

July, 1918.

THE MARNE.

On July 14th, orders were received that the Division was transferred temporarily to the XXII. Corps under Lieut.-Gen. Sir A. Godley and, with the 51st Division, was destined to be associated with the 4th and 5th French Armies, then on the right of the Allied line.

About midnight on the 14th, "A", "B" and "D" companies proceeded to Mondicourt, in heavy rain, and there entrained for an unknown destination. "C" company was detailed as Divisional loading party and followed later. Various rumours as to details of their odyssey continued to be received by the rest of the Battalion for months afterwards.

"Where are we going?" That was the constant question that one heard on every side. It was known that the enemy was striking hard for Paris and the French were being hard pressed. All felt that the Battalion was destined to share in the defence of the City.

That journey will not be forgotten. The train conveying the troops proceeded south and east of Amiens, and skirted the suburbs of Paris, about 36 hours being spent en route. It was intensely hot, water was scarce, the "Haltes Repas" usually came at a time when everyone was sleeping and were of too short a duration to be of value. In spite of this, a wonderful spirit of cheerfulness was manifest in the Battalion. Perhaps the smiles and cheers of the populace, as the train passed through the villages, was an incentive to light-heartedness. One could perceive a strained look in the faces of the villagers, but behind it there was a calm confidence which infected the British Tommy as he dashed southwards to help stem the tide.

The detraining was carried out early in the afternoon on the 16th, at Sommesous. A convoy of French lorries, driven by Annamese was waiting, and in a very short time the Battalion was being rushed towards Châlons. The destination was still very uncertain, as a battle was raging both east and south of Rheims and evidently it was uncertain where help would be required. Near Châlons the convoy was halted, and orders were received to proceed to Athis. Here two pleasant days were spent. The small stream contributed in a great measure to the pleasure and comfort of everybody. Whilst in this village Major J. G. M. Molyneux, D.S.O., Hampshire Regiment, was attached to the Battalion.

Early in the morning of the 19th, the Battalion proceeded by march route, through Tours-sur-Marne, to Germaine, in the Forêt de Courtagnon, where the men rested till the evening, the heat of the day and the dust of the roads having made the march a trying one. In the afternoon the commanding officer and company commanders rode through the forest to make a reconnaissance. From the chateau at Courtagnon a view was to be had of the valley of the Ardre river, along which the advance was to be made,

The general scheme of the XXII. Corps was to advance up this valley, on either side of the river and road to a final objective some seven kilometres from the starting-point, the 62nd Division attacking on the right of the river and the 51st on the left. This river was for most of the advance the dividing line between the two Divisions.

The country in which the subsequent operations took place consists of a river valley, some 3,000 yards in width, of gently undulating cornland, in which lie the villages of Pourcy, Marfaux, Chaumuzy and Bligny; the valley being bounded by steep, thickly wooded spurs or ridges.

At midnight on the 19th the Battalion, still without "C" company, moved forward from Germaine to take up assembly positions preparatory to an advance in the morning. Owing to the densely crowded state of the forest road, packed as it was with French and British troops, guns and transport, this move was a long and exhausting affair, the assembly positions at the edge of the forest not being reached till about 6 a.m. on the 20th. This lack of rest proved a serious addition to the trials of the coming day.

The advance had been fixed for 8 a.m. and at that hour the 186th Infantry Brigade moved out of the forest to the attack. The Battalion was disposed as follows:—"B" company on the right, and "D" on the left of the Battalion sector, "A" in close support to both, as "C" company had not yet been able to arrive on the scene.

On the morning of the 20th: companies were commanded by the following officers "D" by 2/Lieut. N. E. Smith, "B" by Capt. H. C. B. Cottam, "A" by 2/Lieut. R. P. Fenn, "C" by Capt. W. H. Ledgard.

From intelligence previously received, serious opposition was hardly expected to be met at first, Pourcy and Marfaux having been reported as unoccupied by the enemy.

The question that puzzled those in the Battalion, who were conversant with the scheme of attack and the objectives, was whether the men would be able to march the requisite distance.

"The enemy are retiring." This was the information given and it was believed. The Battalion little knew that instead of a march, it was destined to fight a hard long battle, where every inch of ground would be contested; and that many of the best officers and men of the Battalion would fall amongst the beautiful waving wheat to rise no more.

At 8 a.m. the Battalion emerged into open country beyond Courtagnon Chateau, companies in artillery formation in platoons, the Battalion taking the centre of the Brigade front, with the 2/4th West Riding Regiment on their left, and the 5th West Riding Regiment on their right.

Enemy observation balloons were somewhat ominously in view over the valley, and almost at once the Battalion came under heavy artillery fire. It became necessary to deploy immediately, the men moved very swiftly, and continued to advance with wonderful steadiness.

Very early in this stage, the Battalion suffered a severe loss, Major Molyneux being seriously wounded; it was only his third day with the Battalion, and all ranks regretted the misfortune that so soon deprived them of his services.

The advance continued steadily, the Battalion moving forward in splendid order, though the artillery fire became more intense and casualties were already severe. On reaching the line of Pourcy it was found that the leading Brigade, the 185th, had been able to make little progress towards Marfaux, and, on the gently rising ground which runs up to the slope in front of that village, the Battalion came under severe machine-gun fire, suffering much at the same time from heavy shelling, chiefly with 5.9's. The thick crops made it difficult to keep direction, and by this time the whole attack was practically at a standstill, but the three companies pressed on past the left Brigade and endeavoured to keep up the attack, their efforts, however, being met by withering machine-gun fire from the ridges covering the valley.

Small groups of men from "A" and "B" companies, notably one platoon under Lieut. A. Scott, succeeded in reaching the outskirts of Marfaux, but it was found impossible to attain to the line of the village, especially as the left battalion, after trying to work round to the south of Marfaux, had been held up, incurring heavy casualties.

Under the circumstances it was decided to dig in on the slope about 400 yards east of the village. The consolidation was carried out under intense fire; the line of rifle pits, which the hard chalk rendered necessarily shallow, was sited by 2/Lieut. F. C. Holbrook, "A" company, and proved to be so well chosen that in spite of heavy shelling and intense machine-gun fire during the next day or two, only on one occasion was a serious casualty incurred in any of these improvised shelters.

Whilst consolidation was in progress it became possible for company commanders to realise the extreme seriousness of the casualties incurred during the advance. Of the officers who had advanced with "A", "B" and "D" companies, only five were left for duty, and of these 2/Lieut. Drake collapsed from exhaustion during the afternoon: 2nd Lieut. N. E. Smith, commanding "D" Co., succumbed to his wounds later in the day, to the great regret of his fellow officers and the company he so ably led. Lieut. A. Scott, 2/Lieut. S. W. O. Dixon, 2/Lieut. H. L. Willsher, 2/Lieut. C. R. Clapcott and 2/Lieut. R. L. Thurgood were among the wounded, in addition to Major G. J. M. Molyneux, already mentioned.

Further bursts of heavy shelling and a good deal of machine-gun fire were experienced throughout the day, and the difficult task of attending to the wounded in the thick corn had for the most part to be postponed till nightfall. At dusk the Battalion reorganised, "A" and "D" companies holding the forward line of posts, with "B" company in close support.

By this time Battalion headquarters had been located in the village of Pourcy, where very heavy and continuous shelling was experienced, the security afforded by the ruins of the house in which headquarters were established, being, in fact, little if any better than that which company headquarters enjoyed in an old gun-pit just behind the line.

A medical aid post had been established in the cellar adjoining Battalion headquarters, and although shells fell continuously on the village, the aid post remained untouched. The task of getting in the wounded was most difficult, and too much

praise cannot be bestowed on the men attached to Battalion headquarters, stretcher-bearers, sanitary men, pioneers, batmen and cooks, who worked like slaves at this labour of love.

The men were very much shaken and exhausted by the trials of the day, but, in spite of hostile fire, a fair amount of rest was secured in the night, and they shewed themselves cheerful and confident in the morning. The situation, as far as the Battalion was concerned, remained unchanged throughout the 21st and 22nd, the attack on the hill Bois-de-Petits-Champs being carried out with great gallantry and success by the 5th West Riding Regiment.

In the meantime "C" company had been able to rejoin the Battalion, and on the night of the 22nd orders were received for this company to attack Marfaux in conjunction with the New Zealand Cyclist Corps. Early in the morning of the 23rd, they went forward behind a barrage. The village was soon in British hands, with about 40 prisoners and 8 machine-guns, and a new line was consolidated some 500 yards west of Marfaux. It was only a small village, but to the men of the Battalion it constituted a cause of righteous pride.

One cannot help but praise the New Zealand Cyclists who fought with the Battalion that day; it was the first time they had attacked under barrage; their idea of formation for attack was nil, they had one idea and that was to get at the——, and this they did, as many a Boche learned to his cost. They were grand fellows and proud the Battalion was to have fought with them.

During this operation, Capt. W. H. Ledgard was wounded, but with great gallantry carried on for twenty-four hours afterwards. He had led the company with absolute fearlessness, and captured seven prisoners by his own personal effort: it is said that this feat was achieved by a demonstration with an unloaded rifle. It was a distinct loss to the fighting strength of the Battalion when his wound at last compelled him to retire. The command of "C" company devolved upon Lieut. J. F. Bennett, who had also greatly distinguished himself in the capture of Marfaux, and who led the company with skill and gallantry during the rest of the operations in the Ardre valley.

To the regret of all who knew him, Lieut. C. F. Wilson was mortally wounded in the attack upon Marfaux, succumbing to his wounds the same evening. 2/Lieut. Johnson was also wounded on the same day. Another officer, whose courage and coolness distinguished him in the Marfaux affair and later, was 2/Lieut. Viscount Uffington.

On the 24th the situation remained unchanged, but heavy shelling was experienced, the enemy sending over many gas shells. "C" company was withdrawn on the 25th, the line west of Marfaux being held by the New Zealand troops, but this position was reversed on the following day, when "C" company again took over the forward posts, "A", "B" and "D" companies, organised as two companies, being in close support.

These days were most trying to all, but none had more difficult and constant work to perform than had the signallers. At an early stage in the attack, Battalion headquarters was in touch with the companies, and this communication was maintained in

spite of the fact that almost constantly the wires were broken by heavy shelling in Pourcy. The men with bullet and bayonet had done grand work, but none more so than the men, who, armed with pliers, kept the lines intact.

It is not always the smartest soldier, the best drilled and trained man, who does the most work, and no one was of more value to the Battalion than Corpl. May, of the sanitary section. His was not a job in which one looked for honour and glory ; his clothes never seemed to fit and were as dirty as his occupation warranted ; but day after day during that fight he never seemed to tire. Carrying in wounded, carrying back ammunition, loading himself with tins of water and bags of rations, to and fro in the midst of the enemy shelling, he worked incessantly. The Croix de Guerre and the Military Medal, which were subsequently awarded to him, were never better earned by our most blood-thirsty fighting men.

In conjunction with an attack by the 51st Division on the south side of the Ardre, the Battalion was ordered, on the 27th, to push forward and establish a line of posts to the north of Chaumuzu, when that village should be seen to be in British hands.

"C" company was detailed for this movement ; early in the morning Corpl. Williams carried out a daylight reconnaissance, as a result of which the objective was reached without loss and "C" company dug themselves in, the remaining companies moving forward in support, Battalion headquarters being established in Marfaux.

In the re-organisation of the Battalion "A" and "B" companies were amalgamated under the command of Captain H. C. B. Cottam, and "D" company, having lost all its officers, was commanded by 2/Lieut. R. P. Fenn.

A brief remark may be here made on the valuable services rendered during these anxious days by Captain Cottam. In the first advance he led "B" company through a devastating fire with unflinching determination : all the other officers of his company became casualties and only 19 other ranks were left for duty. On the succeeding days he was a wonderful source of inspiration to all ranks, his unfailing courage and cheerfulness reacting in a marked degree upon others. Never a man of robust health himself, his courage and endurance won the admiration of all who knew him, and no officer was more deeply regretted when he fell in action two months later.

During the afternoon of July 27th, a Cavalry Corps came through, and at 7-30 p.m. the Battalion again moved forward to support them. By this time the rain was falling heavily, and the men, who had obtained no real rest since the 19th, struggled on, almost exhausted. Darkness fell and the weary battalion wandered on in a straggling line, not knowing where the cavalry were, nor where the enemy were supposed to be. It all seemed so hopeless, and it was only the grit of the men, and the confidence they had in their officers, that kept them going.

At last the headquarters of the cavalry were found, and, during the night, the line of posts recently held by them was taken over and the men, in rain and darkness, worked at improving what little shelter was afforded by a low bank running in a line nearly due east of Bligny.

At 2-30 a.m. on the 28th, orders were received to attack once more, the objectives assigned being the village of Montagne-de-Bligny, and the old trench line to the west of it. Battalion headquarters now moved forward to Chaumuzy.

Zero hour was fixed for 4-30 a.m., but it proved impossible to organise the attack by that hour, and the Battalion did not move to the attack till about 5 a.m.

"Surely the men cannot be expected to do more. They are completely exhausted." That was the expression of many that morning, and no one could have complained had the Battalion failed to respond to the order issued. There comes a time when human endurance has reached its limit, and the Battalion appeared to have reached that point. Officers and men alike were in a state of complete exhaustion, and it was only the presence of the commanding officer that could put heart into the weary troops, but they made a magnificent attempt to get forward—an attempt which looked hopeless at first, but was crowned with success.

Bligny was to be taken and the enemy driven out of the old French front line, which ran a little distance east of the village. Just at the time when the Battalion was to advance the enemy put down a terrific barrage on the village, which became literally obscured by smoke and dust. Simultaneously with this, the ground was swept from the right by machine-gun fire, as that flank was exposed. The task seemed quite impossible. But the day was young and much might be done before nightfall. Faith to get there can achieve the apparently impossible, and it did that day.

A halt was made along the sunken road in front of Bligny, from which point a short reconnaissance shewed that it was not feasible to enter the village from the right. However, 2/Lieut. F. C. Holbrook and 20 other ranks, discarding their packs, succeeded in getting forward on the left and entered the village at the south-east end without meeting direct opposition while bombardment of very heavy shells was holding up the bulk of the men on and about the sunken road.

About 4 p.m. it was decided to push small bodies of men along the river valley, 2/Lieut. W. Brierley, "A" company, 2/Lieut. Viscount Uffington, "C" company, and Corpl. Williams making the necessary reconnaissance. In this manner four posts were established in the line of the objective, under cover of which further attempts were made, and by 6 p.m. Bligny was taken, the whole objective gained, and the new line consolidated. On this being reported to the 186th Brigade, the following message was received from the G.O.C. Brigade :—"Tell your officers and men they have done splendidly."

During the night 28/29th July, the Battalion was relieved by the 5th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and withdrew into support along the sunken road south-west of Chaumuzy. Here the men dug themselves in under the banks, and, save for an occasional burst of shelling, including some gas shells, spent a quiet night, remaining in the same position on the 29th, withdrawing to the wagon lines in Courtagnon Forest on the 30th, and on the next day to bivouac on the Germaine—St. Imoges road.

During these long and arduous operations, all ranks had displayed courage and tenacity above praise. Shaken by heavy shelling, weakened to an alarming degree by casualties, exhausted by successive advances and nights without shelter, the Battalion hung on till its objectives were taken, and its reputation as a fighting unit established.

In these nine days the Battalion had borne itself in a manner which could not have been excelled by the oldest of veterans. It had learned that in war there need not be dismay when the task seems impossible, and it had shewn to the rest of the Division, that, as a Battalion and individually, in comparative merit it was a force to be reckoned with.

It was the Battalion's first fight on the Western front ; a battle which, taken as a whole, was destined to be the turning point in the war and bring the end in sight.

A considerable number of honours fell to the Battalion as a result of this fight, and there is not enough room to mention those who were worthy of mention. One might refer to Sergt.-Major Churcher, who was a tower of strength to his company ; to Pte. Blunn, rather small in stature but big in grit ; to Capt. Ledgard, who, though badly wounded, saw his objective taken and held before he would consent to be carried away ; and to Lieut. Bennett, a boy in years, on whose shoulders fell the responsibility of commanding the company, and who manfully justified that trust ; to Capt. Fenn, who, though worn out and crooked and nerve shaken would never entertain for one moment the possibility of giving in.

These are samples of the men, who in that first glorious fight, made the name of the Battalion worthy of being recorded in history.

General Berthelot, commanding the 5th French Army, under whom the Division fought, said that Marfaux and Bligny should be written in letters of gold on the pages of history. The Battalion will never forget that these two places fell to its arms.

The transport and supply branches of the Battalion contributed their full share towards the success obtained ; rations and ammunition never failed to reach the line, in spite of adverse weather and the continuous bombardment of the roads.

Another great factor in the success was the work of the Battalion intelligence officer, 2/Lieut. S. D. Greenhalgh. Over and over again when the situation was obscure he went forward under heavy fire and brought back intelligence which enabled the attack to be organised or developed. His work, which was characterised by its absolute fearlessness, contributed in no small degree to the general success. Above all, the untiring courage and energy of the commanding officer was of the greatest value ; without his directing genius and inspiring presence the gallantry of all ranks could have availed nothing.

The Battalion re-organised on the Germaine—St. Imoges road, a draft of 282 other ranks having arrived from the base on the 28th.

While in this bivouac several of the officers and N.C.O's had the honour of being presented to Lieut.-Gen. Sir A. Godley, Commanding the XXII. Corps, who was generous in his praise of the good work done by all ranks of the 186th Brigade.

On August 1st, Minden day, the Battalion moved by march route through Epernay to billets at Chouilly. During this march it had the signal honour of marching past General Berthelot, the distinguished Commander of the 5th French Army, the saluting point being in the village of Dizy-Magenta. After the march past it was warmly congratulated by the G.O.C. Division on having made the best impression of any unit in the two Divisions. This was the first of a number of occasions on which the 2/4th was specially noted for the excellence of its appearance and its marching capabilities at a ceremonial parade; the Battalion may be justifiably proud of the impression made on this occasion when it is remembered that the two Divisions reviewed by Gen. Berthelot were the 51st and the 62nd.

The comfortable billets at Chouilly, and the famous wine of the district, were very acceptable after the recent hardships, and the rest there till August 4th, restored the health and spirits of the men.

On the 4th, the Battalion entrained at Oiry, and 24 hours later arrived at Doullens, whence a long march in the rain brought the Battalion to billets at Authie-St. Leger.

* * * *

CHAPTER VII.

VAUX-VRAUCOURT.

August, 1918.

The Battalion remained at Authie-St. Leger for a fortnight, during which period the general forward movement of the Allied Armies, which continued unchecked until the triumphant and decisive close of the war, was begun. This, however, was hardly foreshadowed in August. Leave was now granted more liberally to all ranks, and members of the Battalion went home, some for the first time since the departure for India in 1914.

On the night of August 19th a move was made to Warluzel, the Battalion being transferred to the VI. Corps, but this was reversed the next night when it marched to Thievres, rejoining the IV. Corps.

Company commands were now distributed as follows :—"A" Capt. W. S. Cave, "B" Capt. H. C. B. Cottam, "C" Capt. J. F. Bennett, "D" Capt. C. P. Bulley.

On the 23rd the Battalion marched to Saulty and remained there for the night, proceeding later by march route and by 'bus, via Monchy, to bivouac near Alette, moving a few hours later to rising ground on the Courcelles road, where orders were presently received to advance towards Achiet-le-Grand in support of the 5th Infantry Brigade.

The position assigned was reached about 2 a.m. on the 25th, Battalion headquarters being located on the railway and the companies disposed north of Achiet-le-Grand, about 500 yards in front of the railway, in immediate support to a battalion of the 3rd Division, as it was thought that a counter attack was likely to be attempted.

About 1 a.m. on the 26th, orders were received for the Battalion to attack and take a line of trenches near the Beugnatre-Vraucourt road. It was necessary to arrange for a defensive flank, as no attack was to be carried out simultaneously on the right.

It was a dark black night : the rain poured in torrents, and the Battalion was spread over a large area. It was three miles to the forming-up place, there were no guides who could help the Battalion to its position, and the task appeared hopeless. The commanding officer was not surprised to be told by the Brigadier-General after the fight was over, and the task fulfilled, that he had not expected the Battalion even to reach the starting point.

As soon as possible after orders were received, the Battalion was assembled on the railway near Behagnies, and from there the trek to the forming up place commenced. Owing to the lack of guides, it was only by means of a compass bearing that the Battalion went forward. Into old trenches, and out of old trenches ; through old wire and across sunken roads, the Battalion advanced, and it was not until the sky began to get grey in the East that the position became a little clearer, and then only because the Commanding Officer had known the locality a year previously.

At last, 15 minutes before zero, a sunken road was reached. It was not known whether this was the correct jumping off place, as nothing had been seen of the Battalion which was supposed to hold the outpost line, but it had to suffice.

The objectives were pointed out to the officers and N.C.O's, and at 6 a.m. the attack began under artillery barrage. It was impossible to get into attack formation before zero, and as the companies emerged from the sunken road they spread out into the necessary formation. This spoke well for the discipline and training of all ranks. The enemy put down a counter barrage, including some gas, and it was necessary to put on gas masks. However, the attack was pressed forward and the first objective was reached without much difficulty.

The second and final objective, however, presented more serious difficulty, owing to heavy machine-gun fire from the road and high ground immediately behind the line of the objective. Especial difficulty was experienced on the left, but "A" company overcame this resistance, and by 9 a.m. the final objective was gained, and the Battalion reorganised.

The casualties incurred during this important operation included Capt. J. F. Bennett and five other ranks killed, and 2/Lieut. G. B. Richmond and 25 other ranks wounded.

The death of Capt. Bennett was the cause of especial regret to his many friends in the Battalion : he had commanded "C" company on many occasions, notably after Capt. Ledgard had become a casualty at Marfaux, and had displayed remarkable qualities of courage and skill as a company commander. He was succeeded in his command by 2/Lieut. R. P. Fenn when that officer returned from leave on the following day.

"A" and "C" companies now held the line of the final objective with "B" in support to "A" and "D" to "C", three platoons of "D" turning to form a defensive flank on the right, a precaution made unnecessary by the advance of the 13th Infantry Brigade during the afternoon.

On the 27th, these positions were slightly altered, "A" company remaining as it was, but with one platoon in support, "B" and "C" companies moving with all their platoons into the line to cover the now extended Battalion sector, "D" company acting in support. The general situation of the Brigade remained unchanged.

"A" company pushed out a patrol towards the horse lines, but came under heavy machine-gun fire, 2/Lieut. F. C. Holbrook and five men being wounded, and one man reported missing.

On the 28th, patrols were pushed out in an attempt to establish posts along the line of the Bapaume-Vraucourt Road, slightly in advance of the front line. "B" company encountered enemy posts in the horse lines, killed several of the enemy, captured a machine-gun and compelled the posts to withdraw. They were, however, themselves forced to retire owing to severe fire from machine-guns near the cross-roads immediately north of the horse lines, two men being killed and one wounded in this operation. "C" company patrolled towards enemy positions south of the horse lines, and located enemy posts and machine-guns: they came under fire from snipers and machine-guns, losing one man killed.

During this afternoon heavy shelling was opened on the centre company "B" and the right company "C," several casualties being incurred. Some gas was also sent over, but a number of men who were only slightly gassed were able to remain on duty.

At 2 p.m. on the 29th, 2/Lieut. W. Brierley, with one platoon from "B" company, was ordered to attack the horse lines, in order to cover the right of the 1st/5th Battalion the Devonshire Regiment, who were advancing on the left. Enemy were located in the horse lines, and another platoon was sent up to reinforce 2/Lieut. Brierley.

The enemy were then driven out and the position occupied, both platoons consolidating east of the road. As the Devons had not yet arrived in position, another platoon was advanced to cover the left flank.

At 5 p.m. the enemy were seen to be advancing in line to counter-attack from a position some 500 yards east of the horse lines. This attack was completely broken up by our rifle and Lewis-gun fire, many casualties being inflicted. At this point 2/Lieut. H. Bryant, "A" company, came up with his platoon and reinforced the line. As a result of this day's operations 21 prisoners were captured with one machine-gun and one Granaten-werfer, and many casualties were inflicted on the enemy.

A few casualties were incurred by us, among which was the death of Sergt. A. Mussell, "A" company, a most gallant and capable non-commissioned officer who was greatly regretted by all ranks.

The Battalion was relieved during the night 29th/30th by the 2/4th West Riding Regiment, the relief being completed at 4 a.m. The companies were distributed through Behagnies, Sapignies, and the old Battalion headquarters.

At 2 p.m. on the 30th, "B" and "D" companies were ordered into the old positions, "C" and "A" being in support, and throughout the 31st August and 1st September the Battalion remained in support to the 2/4th West Riding Regiment.

During September 2nd and 3rd the positions of companies remained relatively the same, "C" and "D" moving slightly forward to a position along the trench on the ridge. On the night of the 3rd, the Battalion was relieved by troops of the 3rd Division, and withdrew into bivouac in the railway cutting north of Courcelles.

Casualties incurred during these operations included :—

Killed :—Capt. J. F. BENNETT, M.C., and 19 other ranks.

Wounded :—2/Lieut. F. C. HOLBROOK, M.C., 2/Lieut. C. B. RICHMOND and 121 other ranks.

This fight was not one of the picturesque and well known battles in the war, but, to those who took part, it was recognised as having been a severe test of the Battalion. It was a test of endurance, as the Battalion held the line for several days. There was no shelter; the men had to live in shallow trenches, open to artillery barrage, and they were constantly gassed. Many episodes made this fight memorable. The story of the attack on the horse lines and the subsequent repulse of the counter-attack will live long in the memory of those who were in the Battalion at the time. Pte. Baldwin will always be associated with this. In training and in rest he was the Battalion barber, at the beck and call of any man, but when a fight was on, razor and scissors were replaced by rifle, bayonet and bomb, and he automatically became a man of authority. Senior N.C.O's looked to him as a leader, and his company commander looked upon him as a supernumerary company-sergt.-major. In the attack on the horse lines, although a private, he became a recognised leader, and the Distinguished Conduct Medal was only a fitting award to this gallant soldier. Another episode in that fight was the crashing of a British aeroplane. The pilot escaped the fall and, dodging the enemy's bullets, ran to the comparative safety of Battalion headquarters, where he spent the day. He left that evening, and two days later, in high appreciation of the hospitality extended to him, flew at a low altitude over the Battalion, risking the enemy's fire, and dropped bags of cigarettes for the men of the Battalion.

CHAPTER VIII.

HAVRINCOURT.

September 4th-16th.

From September 4th, to September 10th, the Battalion remained in bivouac in the railway cutting north of Courcelles ; the place was usually referred to as Gomiecourt, the ruins of that village being close to where the Battalion lay. Reorganisation was hurried on and training steadily kept up, as, by this time, victory seemed to lie with the Allies, the pressure of whose attack could not be allowed to relax. 2/Lieut. G. P. Wheeler, 2/Lieut. W. Gordon Young and 2/Lieut. E. B. Pratt joined the Battalion. On September 7th, 2/Lieut. R. P. Fenn was appointed Adjutant, *vice* Lieut. W. G. Newland, resigned, and assumed the rank of Acting-Captain, Major G. R. Tidmarsh also joined the Battalion during this week.

On September 9th, the Battalion took part in a Brigade ceremonial parade, which included a march past Major-Gen. Sir R. D. Whigham, K.C.B., Commanding the Division. On this, as on a previous occasion, the Battalion distinguished itself by its steadiness on parade and excellence in marching.

The General also distributed ribbons of the medals awarded to the following officers and men for services in the operations in the Ardre Valley in July :—

MILITARY CROSS.

2/Lieut. R. P. FENN and 2/Lieut. S. D. GREENHALGH.

MILITARY MEDAL.

201109 C. S. M. CHURCHER, H.T.	201552 Corpl. ALLEN, F.J.
1295 Sergt. JARVIS, C.	202404 Corpl. KENT, R.A.
200100 Sergt. MEADEN, G.	17079 Pte. RAYBOULD, T.
200534 Sergt. DIGWEED, J.R.	31737 Pte. BLUNN, J.
205042 Corpl. CHARLTON, C.	202848 Pte. HILLIER, J.
13716 Corpl. LANGSTON, G.	12334 Pte. CHILDS, F.
205440 Pte. BUCKETT, W.	

On September 10th, the Battalion received orders to move to a position in Havrincourt Wood preparatory to taking part in the attack of the 62nd Division on the village of Havrincourt, a strongly defended and important point on the farther side of the Canal du Nord.

Havrincourt was a name of which the Division was proud, as being the scene of the wonderful success on November 20th, 1917, when it smashed through the Hindenburg Line to a distance of 7,000 yards.

Would it now be the scene of disaster? Frequent casualties, repeated drafts entailing continual re-organisation, lack of opportunity for training, all went to sap the confidence which was half the fight. All recognised what a hazard the forthcoming fight would be, and all were determined to make such an effort as would bring success even when the hope looked forlorn.

When the scheme was expounded by the Brigade, it was seen that the Battalion had to play a leading part. Havrincourt itself was to be its prize. Difficulties appeared everywhere; the objective was the centre-point of a maelstrom barrage; it was obvious the Battalion would have to pass through the enemy's barrage at a crawl. In fact the task once again looked hopeless, but the seemingly impossible had been accomplished before, and, even if a few more hairs on the commanding officer's head turned white, he had every confidence that the Battalion would be more than equal to the task ahead.

The Battalion proceeded from Gomicourt by march route, via Achiet-le-Grand, Bapaume, Haplincourt, Bertincourt and Ruyalcourt, arriving at the bivouac area in the south-west corner of Havrincourt Wood about 11 p.m. Transport lines were established near Ruyalcourt.

On this occasion "A" company was under the command of Captain W. S. Cave; "B" company under 2/Lieut. H. S. Weekes; "C" company under Capt. W. Brierley; "D" company under Captain C. P. Bulley.

The day following was spent at rest in the shelter of the wood, and a reconnaissance was made of the proposed assembly positions.

At 1 a.m. on September 12th, the Battalion moved forward, following the corduroy track through the forest, to the assembly positions, which were taken up by 3 a.m. There was very little hostile fire during the night, though bombs were dropped by enemy aeroplanes over the wood. All units of the Brigade were able to arrive punctually in their allotted positions, troops of the 63rd Division, who had been holding the line, moving out on relief. The assembly positions were in the open country between Havrincourt Wood and the Canal du Nord, near trenches known as "Banbury Hill" and "Hubert Avenue," Battalion headquarters being near the junction of the latter trench with the "Shropshire Reserve" trench.

Zero hour had been fixed for 5.25 a.m., and 20 minutes later the Battalion moved forward to the attack on a three company front, "A" on the right, "C" in the centre and "D" on the left, with "B" in support, each company advancing on a one-platoon front.

The men went over in splendid style with the greatest steadiness, though all ranks were well aware of the extreme difficulty of the operation which they were ordered to attempt. The complicated nature of the barrage scheme, necessitated by the strength and awkward situation of the position, made the attacking movement a difficult one, for the formidable defences of Havrincourt forbade a frontal attack, so that the advancing troops were compelled to approach the village from the left and then swing to their right. As the assisting barrage was to come from two directions it is not hard to see how easily a mistake might be made in the tumult of an attack, and how fatal such a mistake might prove to be.

The general scheme of the attack was to gain possession of the important strategical position of Havrincourt, the first objective being a line passing through the village from north-east to south-west, the final one a line clear of the village to the north-east.

The Battalion suffered several casualties before leaving its assembly positions at 5.45 a.m., the enemy barrage dropping almost as it started, but few difficulties were encountered until the south-west edge of the village was reached, when fire was opened from the direction of the square in the middle of the village.

On reaching Havrincourt, the advancing companies swung round to their right, and at one hour after zero were formed up at the south-west corner waiting for our barrage to lift.

"A", "C" and "D", to whom was allotted the first objective, attacked on a one platoon frontage, two platoons being detailed to take the nearer half of the village, the remainder to "leap-frog" through to the Eastern edge.

Two hours after zero (about 7.25 a.m.) shells were still falling from our own barrage and the enemy's, and "D" company incurred heavy casualties in the square. "A" company captured the Chateau without much difficulty, but a little later were attacked by machine-gun fire; these guns, however, were successfully dealt with, one officer and twelve men, with their guns, being captured, after another officer and a number of men had been killed. Capt. W. S. Cave greatly distinguished himself in this stage of the attack, and was largely instrumental in the capture of the machine-guns just mentioned.

2/Lieut. G. P. Wheeler was also noticeable in the attack upon the village, which he was the first to enter. He led his platoon forward with splendid dash, rushing two enemy machine-guns, killing or capturing their crews.

Shortly after this, "A" company received information that two enemy machine-guns were holding up the attack of the 2/4th Duke of Wellington's at the south-east edge of the village. A platoon was at once pushed forward and succeeded in killing or capturing the crews of these guns.

On the barrage lifting, about 8.30 a.m., "A", "C" and "D" companies advanced through the village, clearing cellars and dug-outs and making a number of prisoners. "C" company met with some opposition near the church and at various isolated points, but after sharp fighting reached the objective.

The left company, "D", came under the fire of two machine-guns firing down the Graincourt road, but, in conjunction with the 5th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, put these out of action, killing or capturing their crews. Further isolated groups of the enemy were rushed and the objective reached in touch with the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry on the left. Capt. C. P. Bulley led his company during this action with the greatest courage and coolness, rallying the men shaken by heavy casualties in the square, and continuing the attack till the objective was reached.

At this point, "B" company should have advanced and come through to take the final objective. It had, however, lost very heavily in the first stage of the advance, the losses including all the officers, 2/Lieut. Weekes and 2/Lieut. Viscount Uffington being in particular very severely wounded, and was unable to reach its "jumping off" place before the barrage went forward. This advantage was therefore lost and the company held

up ; heavy machine-gun fire was at once brought to bear from the Chapel and Cemetery and a small wood, " T " Wood, beyond, which rendered impossible any attempts to advance beyond the eastern edge of the village. 2/Lieut. L. H. Lainé was detached from " C " company and took over " B ". This officer at once set to work to rally the partially disorganised company. This difficult task he accomplished with great fearlessness under heavy fire, and under his leadership " B " company was eventually able to reinforce the other companies along the line of the railway on the east side of Havrincourt.

The Battalion had thus established itself firmly along the whole line of the first objective.

Several posts were pushed forward on the railway line, and about dusk these reported enemy massing in " T " Wood. About 7 p.m., an attack assisted by low flying aeroplanes was delivered from that quarter, but was broken up by rifle and Lewis-gun fire, and the enemy were dispersed by the 18-pdr. barrage. The gallantry of the men and the steadiness of their fire were recognised by special mention in the despatch of the " Times " recording this action.

During the counter-attack, a report was received that the enemy had penetrated into the village, and the reserve platoons of the Brigade were at once placed under the command of Lieut. Colonel Brook with a view to counter-attacking again and restoring the situation. This report, however, proved to be incorrect, and on receipt of a report that the line was intact, a message was received from the Corps Commander, as follows :— " Well done, Hants. " Messages of congratulation were also received from the Divisional and Brigade Commanders.

It was the end of a hard and glorious day ; Hampshire men had wrested from a strong enemy, Havrincourt—the key of this part of the Hindenburg Line—and having taken, they held. The cost had indeed been heavy, but the prize was value for it.

That night the Battalion was to be relieved by the 5th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. The rain fell in torrents and it was as dark as pitch ; the exact position of the posts was uncertain, making the relief most difficult. About 3 a.m. the relieving Battalion reported " in position, " and the Hampshire men withdrew into reserve in " Shropshire Trench. " In the morning it was found that posts to the south and east of the village amounting to about 50 men, chiefly of " A " company, had not been relieved, and Capt. Cave at once returned to the village to take command of this party. Before this it was found that the enemy had worked along the railway in the sector to the left of the Battalion, where they penetrated the north-east corner of the village, and where they were in the rear of some of the Hampshire posts. These posts, although suffering many casualties, held on gallantly until almost surrounded. One post indeed fought until all were killed. Some days later, when the fighting rolled away from this sector, the commanding officer and the adjutant found the men in the post on the railway, and it was easy to imagine what had happened on the morning of the 13th. Five gallant Hampshire men lay there, their names are not recorded, but they stuck to their ground and

paid the price. When the enemy penetrated the north-east corner of the village a party of the Battalion formed the defence flank of the 2/4th Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment. They fought splendidly and held on, beating off heavy counter-attacks and subsequently took part in the effort to dislodge the enemy, which was done successfully. Later on this party was relieved by the 2/4th Duke of Wellington's, and joined their comrades in "Shropshire Trench."

"A" company, and the Battalion, suffered a severe loss this day by the death in action of 2/Lieut. H. Bryant, M.C. This officer had been awarded the M.C. for his gallant conduct in the action at Vaux-Vraucourt. He was much esteemed both for his personal courage and capability, which won him many friends and made his loss one to be very keenly regretted.

"A" company had another severe blow in the death, from wounds received at Havrincourt, of C.S.M., C. T. Churcher, M.M., who had proved himself an N.C.O. and warrant officer of the very best type and very popular with all ranks of the Battalion.

On September 13th several bursts of heavy shelling were experienced in Shropshire Trench and also near Battalion headquarters, two shells in particular causing severe casualties, Sergt. Betteridge, "A" Company, a very gallant and capable N.C.O., losing his life, and Captain C. P. Bulley, M.C., being severely wounded in several places, the worst wound necessitating the amputation of a leg.

Captain Bulley had rendered great service to the Battalion since its formation, and all ranks keenly regretted the wound which thus compelled his retirement.

On the evening of the 13th, Battalion headquarters and "A" company moved a short distance to a position at Clayton Cross. The position of the Battalion remained unchanged during the 14th, which, except for one heavy burst of shelling, proved a quiet day.

On the 15th, the Battalion once more had its back to the enemy and was marching to a well earned rest. There were many vacant places, and many sad hearts, but at the same time there was jubilation and pride in what had been achieved, and it needed but a small incident to quicken that pride into enthusiasm. This was supplied by the destruction, by one of our aeroplanes, of a large enemy bombing plane which fell in flames near Beugny, the Battalion's halting place for the night. A splendid view was obtained of this aerial fight, and as the monster fell in flames, illuminated by the rays of many searchlights, loud cheers were raised and many hats were thrown into the air. Such was the spirit of the men.

Mention had already been made of a few officers and men who distinguished themselves in this great fight, but there is one other name that must be recorded, Pte. Guerin. He was a French-Canadian who failed to get into the Canadian Forces but who worked his passage to England and then enlisted in an English Regiment. His ideas of discipline were crude; his temperament made him a distinct nuisance to those who had to exercise authority over him; he was constantly in trouble, and at the time of the Havrincourt fight was under a suspended

sentence of imprisonment. Out of the line he was considered a bad soldier, but in the fight, as was the case with many men, he was a hero. On the day of September 12th, he acted as stretcher-bearer, and the number of journeys he made across the open under heavy fire is not known. Though other men were worn out and utterly exhausted, Guerin was still a volunteer when the call for stretcher-bearers came. He was tireless, and his cheerfulness and wonderful reserve of strength that day will never be forgotten. It might be added, the G.O.C. Brigade at once remitted the sentence of imprisonment which was hanging over Guerin's head.

Casualties incurred during these operations included :—

Killed : 2/Lieut. H. BRYANT, M.C. and 34 other ranks.

Wounded : Capt. C. P. BULLEY, M.C., 2/Lieut. H. S. WEEKES, Croix de Guerre; 2/Lieut. Viscount Uffington, 2/Lieut. W. J. WILSON; 2/Lieut. F. C. ISAACS; 2/Lieut. C. A. GADSBY, M.C.; 2/Lieut. E. B. PRATT and 207 other ranks.

Captured by the Battalion on September 12th, 4 officers and 100 other ranks, and seven machine-guns.

On September 16th, the march was continued from Beugny, and the bivouac area was taken up again by the railway cutting near Gomlecourt.

Reinforcements of officers and men were received here to replace the deficiencies caused by the severe casualties incurred in the recent actions at Vaux and Havrincourt. Training of all sorts was carried on, a riding class for officers was instituted, and games were organised, the Battalion taking part in Brigade Athletic Sports and the Divisional inter-company Football League, and a Battalion inter-company Cricket Tournament.

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CHAPTER IX.

MARCOING.

September 27th to October 1st, 1918.

The capture of Havrincourt may be regarded as an essential preliminary to the next stage of the general advance, which was planned to include the capture of the "Hindenburg Support Line," and the establishment of a bridge-head across the Canal de St. Quentin, east of the village of Marcoing. Such was to be the share taken by the VI. Corps in the series of operations officially denoted as the battle of Cambrai. To the Battalion it was better known as the "Battle of Marcoing."

In this action companies were commanded as follows:—"A" by Capt. W. S. CAVE, D.S.O., "B" by Capt. H. C. B. COTTAM, M.C., "C" by 2/Lieut. W. G. YOUNG, "D" by Capt. R. H. GOTELEE.

The Battalion left the Gomiecourt bivouac area, for the last time, on the afternoon of September 25th and marched to near Beugnatre, where the night was spent: the movement was continued the following evening, a bivouac area being occupied a little south-west of Beaumetz-les-Cambrai.

At last it was known that the British were going to deliver a blow which it was hoped and believed would be the "knock-out." Since August the enemy had been driven back, and it was felt that he was getting 'groggy,' and the Battalion was told that the attack was to be carried out on an unprecedented scale over almost 100 miles of frontage.

The leading Division in the attack on this sector was the 3rd Division, the 62nd Division being ready to leap-frog through and then push forward. In the Division the 185th and 187th Brigades had to go forward first, and the 186th Brigade was to be ready to pass right through these two Brigades.

At zero on the morning of the 27th, the Battalion left the trenches, where it had spent the night, and prepared to move forward to a position just south-west of Havrincourt, not far from the "Slag Heap."

That morning will never be forgotten. As far as the eye could see in either direction, the grey morning sky was illuminated by the flashes from the guns. The assembly position was reached without loss, and, although considerable shelling took place during the day, no casualties were incurred.

In the evening, orders were received to move forward to a position in the trenches of the old Hindenburg Line, which was reached with some difficulty, and a cold wet night was spent in considerable discomfort.

The original scheme of the 186th Brigade was that the 5th Duke of Wellington's should secure Marcoing and the line of the canal east of it, and, this done, the Hampshires should pass through and establish themselves in such a position as to secure a bridge-head extending from the Chateau Talma Lock to the canal west of Masnieres.

At 4 a.m. on September 28th, the Battalion moved to a forming up position on the Flesquieres, -Ribecourt Road.

The commanding officer was now informed that the Battalion might be required to attack Marcoing, should it prove that the 5th Duke of Wellington's were unable to reach the assembly position by zero hour (6-30 a.m.). Alternative orders were therefore given to the companies to provide for both contingencies.

Once more the Battalion seemed faced with an impossible task. It was within a few minutes of zero and the directions and instructions given were of necessity both hasty and meagre, it was impossible to ensure that all knew what they had to do, and it was also quite impossible to get into attack formation before the attack was launched. There was time for nothing, a few hasty orders and away the Battalion went. As is well known the place of safety in attack is close up to the barrage which prevents the use of enemy machine-guns on the attackers, but in this case the Battalion had to start about one and a half miles behind the barrage. No wonder the opinion was expressed that nothing but a desperate effort, coupled with luck, could bring success, but a wonderful effort was made, the luck was forthcoming, and success crowned the Battalion's efforts. The name Marcoing, the village taken that day, is one of which the Battalion will always be proud.

At zero hour it was found that the 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment would not be able to reach the forming-up position in time to advance under the barrage, so the 2/4th Battalion pushed on with all speed and caught up with the barrage on a line a little short of Dago Trench.

This advance may be considered a remarkably fine effort, as the men had had little rest during the night and a troublesome march of over two hours along an intricate trench system, before reaching the forming up position on the Flesquieres road.

The companies were organised on a three-platoon basis, and formed up with "A" on the right and "C" on the left; these companies attacking on a two-platoon front with the third platoon in support, their objective being the system of trenches immediately west of Marcoing.

The second line advanced with "B" company on the right and "D" on the left, both companies attacking on a one-platoon front with orders to leap-frog through the leading companies, fight their way through the village, establish posts along the west bank of the canal, and push forward posts to the far side at the bridges.

Near Dago trench, "A" company saw an enemy battery of three guns, the horses of which were just being rushed up. Lewis-gun fire was at once brought to bear, and the gunners made off, abandoning guns and horses. After some spirited fighting, which resulted in the capture of several prisoners and a number of trench mortars and machine-guns, "A" company reached its objective on the western edge of Marcoing. They had been harassed by long range machine-gun fire from the right, but this was effectively dealt with by the Hallamshires (York and Lancs Regiment).

"C" company, on the left, admirably led by 2/Lieut. W. G. Young, reached Premy Support trench without much difficulty; beyond this point, however, strong opposition was encountered, but this was presently overcome and the company proceeded to consolidate on its objective. Among its captures had been a field-gun with about ten prisoners.

At this stage, "B" and "D" companies came through, having reached the first objective without loss. The leading companies had driven the enemy from the west of the village, in which "B" company got a footing without much difficulty.

Up to this point fortune had been exceedingly kind to the Battalion in the matter of casualties, which were few in number, although there were many instances of phenomenal luck, as in the case of 2/Lieut. A. C. Matthew. The Battalion had passed the enemy barrage, which was considerable, when a shell pitched at this officer's feet; he disappeared in a cloud of smoke and dust, and one instinctively said "poor old Matthew has gone." However, when the smoke cleared away, he was seen to scramble to his feet, and waving a stick, he shouted to his men to "come on." This was luck indeed, but when a second shell dropped in close proximity to him, and a second time he was seen to be bowled over, it was felt, and said, that it was too much to expect luck to favour the same person twice in such a short space of time. However, fortune excelled herself with Matthew that day, a chip out of his ear was the only result, and on he went.

On attempting to cross the Escaut river, the company came under machine-gun fire, but two Lewis-guns of No. 5 platoon quickly obtained fire superiority, and the German gunners fled. Another nest of machine-guns was encountered a little later, but the enemy, perceiving No. 7 platoon working round them, evacuated the position, the guns being captured with several wounded prisoners.

On approaching the canal, considerable fire was encountered from machine-guns and rifles: after some difficulty this fire, which was directed from the line of the railway beyond the canal, was subdued, and a post established on the further bank, Capt. H. C. B. Cottam, M.C., crossing the canal with a small party of men. The supporting platoons of "B" company meanwhile were 'mopping up' in the village, and captured about a dozen prisoners.

On the left, "D" company met with considerable shell-fire and machine-gun opposition, but after a sharp fight succeeded in driving the enemy from his positions, and capturing a number of prisoners. As they approached the Escaut river, heavy machine-gun fire was opened on them; when the company was momentarily held up, Capt. R. H. Gotelee was the first to cross the river, on a plank bridge, and to locate the enemy. He remained for ten minutes under snipers' fire until he had located the opposition, then rushed his men across the canal, and established posts on the bank—a noteworthy example of fearless leadership.

The 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment had, in the meantime, moved forward and came up with the Battalion as the latter approached the canal, where they assisted in obtaining fire superiority over the enemy on the far bank.

The attack was pressed on by other battalions of the brigade, and the companies re-organised, with posts established along the canal.

Marcoing had been less knocked about than most of the other villages, but during the day its appearance underwent a change, for it was shelled incessantly. This was very trying, and a number of casualties, chiefly in "B" company, were incurred. Battalion headquarters was established in an old German pill box, and, although heavily shelled, no material damage was done.

A feature of that day's position was the Aid Post, and for once the Medical Officer, Captain Nevling was satisfied with the accommodation. He had a wonderful cellar, which fortunately was not required. Capt. Nevling was an American doctor attached to the British Forces, and, during this fight served the Battalion splendidly.

At about 5 p.m. on the next day, 29th, on receipt of instructions from the G.O.C. Brigade, the Battalion advanced across the canal with the object of attacking Rumilly.

Heavy shelling was encountered during the passage of the canal and darkness increased the difficulty of the undertaking. On coming up with the 2/4th Duke of Wellington's Regiment heavy machine-gun fire was experienced from the left flank, chiefly from the direction of Mont sur l'Oeuvre, and further advance was found to be impracticable. Touch was gained, however, with troops of the 2nd Division on the left.

During the morning of the 30th it was found that the enemy still occupied a small portion of the Rumilly support trench and one running northward from it.

Lieut. Colonel Brook, after a personal reconnaissance made at great danger to himself, decided to endeavour to clear this 'pocket' of the enemy. A patrol was sent along the canal bank to try and get in touch with the next battalion, and when it was found that the latter had not yet come up, a defensive flank was formed. An attack was therefore made about noon, but though this was made with the greatest gallantry under 2/Lieut. Turner, "C" company, who displayed splendid dash and courage, the attacking platoons were unable to complete the task, and after they had suffered heavy casualties it was judged wiser to withdraw them.

A second attack was made in the afternoon under 2/Lieut. Shorland, but, although this too was carried out with the greatest determination, it was not found possible to completely clear Rumilly support, and as the position gained was untenable, the men had to be withdrawn to their former position.

This was a small affair but it enabled heroism, which has not been excelled in either this war or any other war, to be brought out. The charge of the Light Brigade was no finer than the mad dash of these 20 Hampshire men. Sergt. Hamilton can be recalled. He was an old veteran of the South African War; he was calm and cool and had not that wild "happy-go-lucky" carriage which many younger men possessed, but on this occasion, as on many other occasions, he proved himself absolutely without fear. The double D.C.M. which he wears is small enough token of his valour.

Then there was Sergt. Jarvis, a jockey in size, but a giant in grit. Along the trench he led his men in a daring attack, and although most of his men became casualties, and the remainder were exposed to enfilade machine-gun fire, he would not retire until the commanding officer gave the word to withdraw.

On the following morning, October 1st, the 3rd Division passed through to continue the advance, the 62nd Division being withdrawn one hour before zero to allow the barrage to come down on Rumilly Support. This attack commenced at 6 a.m., troops of the 76th Infantry Brigade passing through the sector held by the Battalion.

The commanding officer, suspecting that the enemy were yet concealed in dug-outs in Rumilly trench, ordered "C" company to follow up the attack of the 76th Infantry Brigade in order to ensure that these dug-outs were completely cleared.

The left platoon of "C" company found and killed eight Germans emerging from a dug-out, and counted no fewer than 32 German machine-guns and 25 dead enemy, including three officers.

The right platoon found a large dug-out in which they captured 70 enemy and 5 machine-guns.

The action on the part of "C" company effectually cleared the remaining enemy from Rumilly Support, and rendered valuable assistance to the attack of the 76th Infantry Brigade by preventing the enemy from firing into the backs of the leading battalions. During this successful operation, as well as in the attacks of the previous afternoon, the most distinguished gallantry was shewn by 2/Lieut. J. W. Shorland, whose brilliant leadership on both occasions won for him the distinction of D.S.O. Another officer who greatly distinguished himself was 2/Lieut. T. Turner, M.C., who led his platoon against heavy fire, after being wounded and who did not cease from his efforts until again, this time very seriously, wounded.

2/Lieut. R. R. Dear, M.C., was employed during this action as Intelligence Officer, in which capacity he rendered most valuable service, showing great qualities of coolness and fearlessness in reconnaissance under fire.

"B" company and the Battalion suffered a very heavy loss in this action by the death of Capt. H. C. B. Cottam, M.C., who was shot during the afternoon of the 30th. Reference is made elsewhere to his services to the Battalion : the capabilities he displayed on other occasions were signally shewn in this, his last and, possibly, his most important action.

During the affair of Marcoing the captures made by the Battalion included 4 field-guns, 46 machine-guns, 10 Trench Mortars and over 100 prisoners. The casualties included :—

Killed : Capt. H. C. B. COTTAM, M.C., and 19 other ranks. Died of Wounds : 2 other ranks. Wounded : 2/Lieut. A. C. MATTHEWS, 2/Lieut. T. TURNER and 69 other ranks.

CHAPTER X.

SOLESMES.

October 2nd to October 22nd, 1918.

On the morning of October 2nd the Battalion left Marcoing and marched by way of Flesquieres to a bivouac area in the old German trench system to the north of Havrincourt, remaining there till the 8th.

On the 5th, Lieut. Col. Brook went home on leave, Major P. G. Tidmarsh assuming command of the Battalion. Capt. Cottam was buried in a British Field Cemetery near the bivouac area on the 4th. It was but rarely an opportunity could be afforded to pay the last honours to a fallen hero and comrade, and all ranks were glad to be able to show this respect to one who had proved himself so admirable a soldier.

During the week training was carried on and the Battalion re-organised; it was fully realised by this time that the advance of the British forces was proving a tremendous success, the enemy retreating hurriedly all along the line, and their organisation failing before the repeated strokes of the Allies: all ranks were ready and anxious to take part in further successes.

Warning orders were received on the 7th, and on the evening of the 8th, the Battalion left the bivouac area and marched through the village of Flesquieres to bivouac in a trench system about a mile west of Marcoing. The latter village was passed on the following afternoon, and the canal crossed, the night being spent in billets in the ruins of Rumilly. On the 10th the Battalion proceeded to Seranvillers, thence on the next day to Carnieres, passing through the villages of Wambaix and Estourmel. One day was spent in Carnieres, and on the 13th the Battalion moved to Boussieres.

It was a novelty to enter villages such as these, which had not been seriously damaged by shell-fire, and the house billets were appreciated by men who had spent months with no shelter except that of trenches and dug-outs. The change, moreover, made a considerable difference to the health and well-being of the men.

Shortly after reaching Boussieres, Major Tidmarsh, greatly to the regret of all ranks, was evacuated to hospital seriously ill: he was succeeded in the temporary command of the Battalion by Major G. E. C. Cockburn, D.S.O., M.C., Royal Irish Fusiliers.

From Boussieres the Battalion moved on the 17th to Quiévy, relieving the 2nd Irish Guards and remaining there in billets till the 19th.

On the night of October 19th the Battalion moved out of Quiévy to take part in the attack of Solesmes, the general action being officially designated late the Battle of Selle River.

A preliminary assembly position was taken up in a deep cutting in the St. Vaast—St. Python railway, about half-a-mile from the latter village, which is a suburb of Solesmes. This position was reached by the last party of the Battalion about midnight. A certain amount of shelling, chiefly shrapnel, was encountered on the way, one casualty being incurred and two mules put out of action, one limber and the cart containing medical stores being hit on the Quiévy-Solesmes road.

In this action "A" company was commanded by 2/Lieut. G. P. Wheeler, M.C.; "B" by Capt. L. H. Lainé, M.C.; "C" by Capt. W. Brierley, M.C., and "D" by Capt. R. H. Gotelee, M.C.

By 1-30 a.m. the companies were in the assembly position on the slopes just west of the railway, headquarters remaining in the cutting. The Battalion scheme was that "A" should lead the advance, and establish a series of posts in houses just beyond the River Selle; "B" company were to follow and establish similar posts on the left; "C" and "D" were to mop up the area between.

The very greatest credit is due to 2/Lieut. S. D. Greenhalgh, M.C., who, with two observers and two runners, was responsible for guiding the companies from their preliminary to their final positions and directing them across the Selle.

Although badly gassed in reconnoitring the ground prior to the advance of the companies, he carried on with the greatest coolness and sound judgment, often under fire; the complete success of this preliminary operation being solely due to him; by his tireless energy he then, as always, set a magnificent example to the Battalion.

The weather conditions were very bad, with torrents of rain and no moon: this lack of moonlight was an advantage rather than otherwise during the preliminary movements and undoubtedly helped to make the attack a surprise to the enemy, but it hampered the final operations and mopping up.

Zero hour was fixed for 2 a.m., by which time the 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment had already crossed the river, by a bridge erected in the village. The leading companies crossed and re-organised on the eastern bank; this move was completed at 2-30 a.m. without any casualties; "C" company, who were to be responsible for mopping up the centre of the village, did not cross till 3 a.m.

"A" company, after re-forming on the eastern bank of the river, proceeded along the St. Python—Solesmes road, but were temporarily held up, as the houses in St. Python had not been completely cleared of the enemy. This completed, the company passed through the 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment, and continued their advance. Very heavy rifle and machine-gun fire was met with on the outskirts of Solesmes, but this opposition was eventually overcome, two machine-guns and about 30 prisoners being taken. This success was largely due to the courage and leadership of 2/Lieut. G. P. Wheeler, M.C. The first post was established by the leading platoon about 4-30 a.m. without further opposition. The second platoon on passing through met with considerable machine-gun

fire but pushed on, capturing two more machine-guns and 20 prisoners, establishing their post about 5-15 a.m. The third platoon carried on with the clearing of the area allotted to them.

"D" company, skirting the houses of St. Python, passed through a company of the 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment in the road and advanced on their objectives; they were met with heavy machine-gun fire from behind a loopholed brick wall immediately to their front, as well as enfilade fire from their right flank. This considerably delayed their progress, but by an outflanking movement a machine-gun was captured and another driven into the town where it surrendered to the 2/4th York and Lancaster Regiment, as they approached the town from another direction. Two "D" company platoons established posts, the third platoon proceeding to mop up between. 2/Lieut. E. M. Neil of this company was conspicuous throughout this operation, shewing fine qualities of leadership and cool judgment.

"B" company, following close behind "D," made straight for their first objective, passed through a company of the 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment, and established a post with little opposition about 5.30 a.m. Their second platoon met with considerable resistance on the right, chiefly from machine-gun fire and a trench mortar. This was overcome, principally by the gallantry of 2/Lieut. A. H. Barker, who rushed the post, killed three of the crew, took the remainder prisoners, and captured the gun.

"B" company's posts were established by 6-15 a.m., the third platoon, as with the other companies, being detailed to 'mop up.'

"C" company crossed the Selle at 3 a.m., advanced through "A" company posts and cleared their allotted area without much opposition, their third platoon being kept in Battalion reserve. "C" company captured five machine-guns and two trench-mortars without incurring a casualty.

All the Battalion objectives were attained by 7-15 a.m. In the meantime headquarters had moved up from the railway cutting to a house in St. Python where heavy shelling was experienced throughout the day, but few casualties were incurred.

A forward report centre was quickly established at the western edge of St. Python under the command of Major B. E. T. Parsons, who rendered very valuable assistance throughout the action. The Battalion signalling sergt., Sergt. D. Raymont, was largely responsible for maintaining communication, and very fearless work was done by him and the signallers in repairing wire under heavy fire.

Throughout the operations touch was maintained with the 5th Duke of Wellington Regiment on the left, and the 2/4th York and Lancaster Regiment on the right.

A large number of prisoners, 262, was taken during the morning of the 20th, with twelve machine-guns and two trench mortars. Our casualties numbered 29 in all, including eight other ranks killed and 2/Lieut. A. C. Matthew and 20 other men wounded. The slightness of this roll was, doubtless, due in the first place to

surprise tactics adopted, especially the rapid crossing of the river, for the enemy barrage came down on the assembly position very soon after it had been vacated; in the second place to the swift and unhesitating entry into the village and the prompt and effective handling of Lewis-guns in the streets. The scheme of attack evolved by the commanding officer was carried out very exactly and proved an overwhelming success.

On the 21st, the Battalion was still subjected to a good deal of long range fire, enemy aeroplanes coming over at a low altitude, but this died down under pressure of the troops who came through, and in the afternoon the Battalion marched into Solesmes without opposition, the enemy having withdrawn before the remaining Brigades of the 62nd Division as they passed through the 186th Brigade. The last named Brigade now took up the 'Solesmes Line,' the Battalion relieving the 2/4th. York and Lancaster Regiment. The night of the 21st was spent in billets in Solesmes; though the town was shelled intermittently throughout the night, and on the 22nd some gas was experienced, no further casualties were incurred. On the evening of the 22nd the Battalion, relieved by troops of the 3rd Division, marched out to Bevillers and went into billets there.

In this very successful action of Solesmes the Battalion had every right to congratulate itself on its good fortune in being commanded, in the absence of Lieut.-Col. Brook, by so able and distinguished a soldier as Major Cockburn.

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CHAPTER XI.

LE QUESNOY AND MAUBEUGE.

November 2nd to 11th, 1918.

From October 22nd to 31st, the Battalion remained at Bevillers, re-organising, receiving reinforcements and training. The rest here was much appreciated; several football matches were played, and entertainments were given by the 'Pelicans,' the concert party of the 62nd Division, who did so much under difficult conditions to provide amusements for the troops throughout the campaign.

Lieut.-Col. Brook, on returning from leave, was in temporary command of the 186th Brigade, resuming command of the Battalion on Nov. 2nd.

On October 31st the Battalion moved to Solesmes, and remained in billets there for two nights, proceeding on the night of November 2nd, via Romeries, to Escarmain, the march occupying a long time owing to the congested state of the roads.

November 3rd, was spent at Escarmain, a reconnaissance being made in the direction of Ruesnes during the afternoon, and at 11-30 p.m. the Battalion proceeded to the assembly positions allotted, preparatory to the attack planned for the next morning. Companies were commanded on this occasion as at Solesmes.

The attack of the Battalion was to be part of a general attack along the whole front, the New Zealand Division assaulting Le Quesnoy on the right, the 187th Infantry Brigade advancing on the left.

As the village of Ruesnes was liable to be heavily shelled and gas concentrations had been fired on it for some time previously, a cross-country track had been marked out with stakes from a point some distance south-east of the village as far as the Le Quesnoy-Ruesnes road. From a point slightly in advance of this road, the route to be followed by the Battalion had been marked out at dusk with lines of tape by 2/Lieut. S. D. Greenhalgh, M.C., whose work once more proved to be of the greatest value to the Battalion.

Thanks to this precaution, no difficulty was experienced in reaching the assembly positions, and the Battalion was in position before 3 a.m. The line taken up was one approximately parallel with the railway, "A" company on the right, "B" slightly swung forward on the left, "C" in support to "A", "D" in support to "B".

Battalion headquarters, in conjunction with that of the 2/4th Duke of Wellington's Regiment, was established in a small farm close to the Le Quesnoy—Ruesnes road.

The Battalion was the leading unit of the 186th Brigade, and was assigned the task of advancing the line of the Brigade sector as far as the Orsinval—Le Quesnoy road, known in the scheme of attack as the "Blue Line."

The objective of the leading companies was a ravine roughly parallel to the final objective, known to be strongly held by the enemy. "C" and "D" companies were to 'leap-frog' through after the capture of the ravine, and consolidate on the Orsinval-Le Quesnoy road,

The starting place was reached without much difficulty, but having got there, the situation was anything but comfortable. In front of the Battalion was a railway embankment, about three feet in height, which gave little cover. The exact position of the enemy was not known, but about 80 yards along the embankment was a copse which held enemy machine-guns, and organisation into formation for attack was carried out with much difficulty. At last, however, all were in position.

About half an hour before zero, the enemy gave a brilliant firework display, and all wondered if the presence of the Battalion had been discovered. Every moment the enemy barrage was expected. However, these lights did not appear to have any meaning so far as the attack was concerned. Before the advance commenced, it was realised that the position occupied was a dangerous one, as the line on the railway embankment appeared to be a probable place for the enemy counter-barrage; it was impossible to get further forward without being discovered, and immediately in rear was a swamp; so the Battalion had no alternative, and had to take its chance. Unfortunately, a good many casualties were incurred before the attack was launched, and there would have been excuse had the nerves of the men been shaken.

"A" company advanced at zero hour (3.30 a.m.) and at once encountered serious opposition from machine-guns, as well as suffering a number of casualties from the enemy artillery barrage which fell as the advance began, but the company went forward in fine style, and captured their sector of the Battalion's objectives, the line of the steep, wooded ravine. Three machine-guns were taken, and 55 prisoners, many enemy being killed in the attack. "B" company on the left also suffered from the enemy barrage, and soon after commencing the attack, met with determined opposition from a copse on the slope of the ravine. This strong point was only captured after some very sharp fighting, and the enemy machine-guns crews, after a stubborn resistance, were killed or captured. Several of these guns and about 80 prisoners were taken.

The Battalion's first objective being thus attained, "C" and "D" companies 'leap-frogged' the first line and advanced up the slope beyond the ravine under heavy fire from machine-guns. The enemy held a strong position here and offered a determined resistance, but, by the skilful handling of platoons and the gallantry of the men, the final objective along the line of the Orsinval-Le Quesnoy Road was taken by 7 a.m., the captures including seven more machine-guns and about 160 prisoners, making an approximate total of 300 prisoners and 18 machine-guns and trench mortars taken by the Battalion in less than an hour and a half.

Capt. W. Brierley, M.C. was wounded during "C" company's advance; he had taken part in practically every action in which the Battalion had shared in France, including the long struggle in the Ardre valley in July, he had previously been wounded in Palestine, and had been awarded the Military Cross and the Croix de Guerre (avec palme). 2/Lieut. C. A. Geer was also wounded, and 2/Lieut. A. L. King had the misfortune to break his arm in falling on the way up to the assembly position. In addition to these casualties, 19 other ranks were killed and 70 wounded.

The night of the 4th was spent by the Battalion in houses on the line of its final objective, the remaining battalions of the Brigade having passed through to continue the attack.

Early on the morning of the 5th, these billets were left, and a forward move was made, following up the attack of the 185th Brigade, the Battalion marching, in bad weather, through Gommegnies to Hitonsart. This village was left again on the morning of the 6th, the Battalion halting for breakfast on the road and reaching Obies about 10 a.m.

It was very interesting to march into a village which had been held by the enemy only a few hours previously, and the Battalion received a hearty and almost embarrassing welcome from the inhabitants. The situation was by no means clear, and, although an attack had been ordered, careful reconnaissance was necessary before an attempt could be made to push on. This reconnaissance was carried out under Major B. E. T. Parsons, and patrols were pushed out to get in touch with the enemy; Battalion headquarters remained at Obies. The men were quickly on excellent terms with the inhabitants, and in a very short time flags bedecked the streets, and coffee was produced.

As soon as the situation had been cleared up, the Battalion moved forward to attack the village of Gogniaux, the Guards Division being on our left. The attackers were under a very great disadvantage as no barrage was available, and, even if it had been, the villages could not have been shelled owing to the civilian population occupying them. This made the attack extremely difficult, but the officers and N.C.O's led the men with spirit, and the attack was carried out with great dash.

Two batteries of guns, which had been attached to the Battalion, were pushed forward, ready to take on targets of opportunity or deal with tanks should the enemy use this method of counter attack.

The Battalion's orders were to capture the line of the Bavai-Avesnes road, known as the "Brown Line", in conjunction with the 2/4th Duke of Wellington's Regiment and, if possible, exploit to Delhays Wood.

Very little opposition was encountered at first, though the whole area was subjected to heavy shell fire. There was however serious difficulty on the left flank, from which direction heavy enfilade machine-gun fire was experienced. In spite of this, the village of Gogniaux was captured after some sharp fighting in the orchards, where a number of the enemy were killed and two machine-guns captured.

On advancing again from the village in the direction of Quene-au-Loup, enfilade fire was again active on the left, the leading companies having outstripped the Guards operating on that flank.

This group of villages, Gogniaux, Mexquignies, and Le Timon, was the objective of "C" and "D" companies, and here "A" and "B" attempted to pass through, but enfilade fire made their advance most difficult, the mist and rain, and the nature of the country rendering direction hard to keep.

In the meantime, 2/Lieut. H. L. Willsher, "D" company, pushing ahead with his platoon, forced the "Brown Line" at Quene-au-Loup, and drove the enemy towards the Bois-du-Chene, inflicting severe casualties.

As "B" company was held up near Le Timon by machine-gun fire from front and left, a personal reconnaissance was made by 2/Lieut. H. F. Wheeler, after which this officer with great dash and skill attacked the post which was causing the trouble, captured the gun and killed the crew.

The platoon of "D" company, though isolated in advance of the Battalion and exposed to enfilade fire, held on stoutly to its position and thus enabled the following companies to work forward on the right flank, and to succeed eventually in occupying the main road Pont-sur-Sambre—Bavai, as far as the Brigade boundary, the enemy retiring on La Longueville. Warm congratulations were received from the Guards Division who witnessed this advance. The Battalion was thus established on the Brigade objective, Battalion headquarters moving up to Gogniaux. The night passed quietly, and at dawn the attack was continued by the 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment, and two units of the 185th Brigade, the Battalion being responsible for guiding them to the "Brown Line."

It had now rained continuously for 24 hours, and those companies, who from their position were unable to take shelter, passed the night in a state of great discomfort.

This day's encounter proved to be the last fighting in which the Battalion took part. It had been a hard trying day and success was due in a very large measure to the initiative of the section and platoon commanders. Fortunately casualties were very light, but towards the end of the day Pte. Fred Bushby was killed. This man had done excellent work as a runner in all the fights in which the Battalion had been engaged, and it seemed hard luck that he should lose his life at the very end of the last fight.

On the 7th, the Battalion remained in the same area, Battalion headquarters being in Gogniaux and the men distributed in billets between that village and Quene-au-Loup and on the Bavai road.

These hamlets consisted of small farmhouses, and the billets were anything but palatial. Everyone, however, was in the best of spirits, and although tired, sounds of laughter, singing and dancing were heard in many of the houses as the men quickly got on good terms with the inhabitants. These people were wildly enthusiastic on their release from the tyranny of the Hun and feeling ran high, whilst sometimes their fervour amounted almost to embarrassment to men of a shy and quiet disposition.

Dispositions remained unchanged on the 8th, and an opportunity was thus afforded for giving a much needed rest to the almost exhausted troops.

On the 9th, the Battalion proceeded forward in the direction of Maubeuge, halting for some time on the road west of Vieux Mesnil, and entering about 2 p.m. the suburb of Sous-le-Bois.

Orders had been received for the Battalion to attack through the 187th Brigade, and the prospect appeared to be very difficult. Sous-le-Bois, which was to be our goal, lay across a deep, wide canal, and it was expected that all the bridges would be destroyed. This was found to be the case, and it was a great relief when it was known that the Boche had withdrawn and the village could be occupied rather than fought for.

On the morning of the 10th, the Battalion advanced again, crossing the River Sambre by a pontoon bridge to relieve the 2/4th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry Regiment in the outpost line in the east of Maubeuge; Battalion headquarters was established in St. Lazare, "C" and "D" companies in the outpost line, "A" and "B" in support in Rousies.

At dawn on the morning of the 11th, a patrol, under Captain R. H. Gotelee, M.C., advanced to Marpont. No enemy were discovered and a considerable quantity of railway stock was captured.

At 9 a.m., on the 11th, orders were received that hostilities would cease at 11 a.m., when the Armistice would come into force. It was expected that the possibility of cessation of hostilities would bring a feeling of relief almost overwhelming in its effect. Strange to say nobody seemed to be excited in the least at the prospect, and it would appear that war with all its horrors and hardships had become the normal state of existence. If outwardly there was little sign of excitement, there could be no doubt that many a man that morning muttered a fervent "Thank God."

Shortly before the hour of the cessation of hostilities the Commanding Officer and the Adjutant rode to the outpost line and saw the last casualty of the war in this part of the line, a man of the 42nd Division being shot through the arm, supposedly from the wood just in front. A search was made for this enemy but he had disappeared. This incident however, served to make the Commanding Officer and the Adjutant pedestrians instead of equestrians, for having escaped so far it was much too near 11 o'clock for undue risks to be run.

OFFICERS SERVING WITH THE BATTALION ON ARMISTICE DAY.

NOVEMBER 11th, 1918.

Commanding Officer	-	-	Lieut.-Col. F. Brook, D.S.O., M.C.
Second in Command	-	-	Major B. E. T. PARSONS, D.S.O.
Adjutant	-	-	Capt. R. P. FENN, M.C.
Assistant Adjutant	-	-	Capt. A. F. L. BACON.
Intelligence Officer	-	-	Lieut. S. D. GREENHALGH, M.C.
Assistant Intelligence Officer	-	-	2/Lieut. A. C. MATTHEW.
Signalling Officer	-	-	Lieut. L. R. T. COWARD (On Leave)
Transport Officer	-	-	Capt. P. S. SKUSE (On Leave)
Assistant Transport Officer	-	-	2/Lieut. R. M. LEES
Quartermaster	-	-	Lieut. S. A. THOMPSON.
Medical Officer	-	-	Lieut. A. B. NEVLING (U.S.A.)
Chaplain	-	-	Rev. E. G. WHEELER

"A" Company.

Capt. W. S. CAVE, D.S.O.
 2/Lieut. G. P. WHEELER, M.C.
 2/Lieut. R. R. DEAR, M.C.
 2/Lieut. J. A. Gwilliam
 2/Lieut. E. B. PRATT

"C" Company.

Capt. W. G. YOUNG, M.C.
 2/Lieut. G. E. WOODBOURNE

"B" Company.

Capt. L. H. LAINE, M.C.
 Lieut. J. HART (On Course)
 2/Lieut. A. H. BARKER, M.C.
 2/Lieut. H. F. WHEELER, M.C.
 2/Lieut. C. B. RICHMOND
 2/Lieut. G. BOLWELL.

"D" Company.

Capt. R. H. GOTELEE, M.C.
 2/Lieut. H. L. WILLISHER, M.C.
 2/Lieut. E. M. NEIL, M.C.
 2/Lieut. F. D. DANCE

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CHAPTER XII.

A week after the declaration of the Armistice, orders were received for the Battalion to leave the Maubeuge area, to take part in the march into Germany. Throughout this march, which occupied four weeks, including eighteen days actually on the road, the Battalion marched as a unit of the Brigade, the 62nd Division being transferred to the IXth Corps, Second Army, for the march.

From Maubeuge the first stage was to Cousolre, Nov. 18th, a distance of 14 kilometres. On the 19th, the Battalion moved to Ragnies, 14 kilometres, crossing the Franco-Belgian Frontier 2 kilometres north-east of Boussignies at 11 a.m., Tarcienne, 20 kilometres, was reached on the 20th, and the Battalion remained in that place until the 24th, when the next march brought us to the village of Devant-les-Bois, 16 kilometres. On the 25th the march continued, St. Gerrard, 14 kilometres, being reached on the 26th. The next day the Battalion crossed the River Meuse at Ivroir and billeted at Evrehailles, 20 kilometres, passing through very picturesque scenery. The weather at this period was beginning to be wintry, and a good deal of rain fell.

By this time the rationing of the troops had become a serious problem as the railways on the lines of communication were being constantly blown up by delayed action mines which had not been removed, and the transport of supplies was therefore made most difficult. In many cases rations for the day had not arrived, and some battalions commenced their march without breakfast. Fortunately, however, the Battalion had not to undergo this hardship, and a word of praise might be noted here to the Quartermaster, Lieut. Thompson and to the C.Q.M. sergeants for their excellent work. The services of the former had been invaluable. From the time the Battalion joined the 62nd Division, at no time had the rations failed to reach it. During this march the rations

were somewhat insufficient, and it speaks well for the esprit de corps of the Battalion, that there was little, if any, discontent. The men understood the difficulty, and although in a small degree they exercised the soldiers prerogative and 'groused,' their behaviour was excellent.

From Evrehailles a trying, wet march was made to the area Faiys-Barcenal, 18 kilometres. The companies were billeted in two villages, and Battalion headquarters' mess was located in the Chateau de Barcenal, being received with gracious hospitality by the Comte de Villermont and members of his family. A halt of 12 days was made here: some sport was enjoyed by officers of the Battalion, a great deal of dancing took place at the Chateau, where many visitors, civilian and military, were entertained, visits were paid to neighbouring Chateaux, and trips were arranged for the men by lorry to Namur and Dinant. On December 5th, the Battalion took part in the ceremonial parade of the 186th Infantry Brigade, including a presentation of medal-ribbons to officers and other ranks by Major Gen. Sir R. D. Whigham, K.C.B., commanding the 62nd Division, and a march past in which, as on previous occasions, the Battalion was distinguished by its smartness and steadiness on parade. Many members of the Battalion will look back with pleasure to the stay in this picturesque part of Belgium. Whilst here, Capt. W. S. Cave, D.S.O. was evacuated to hospital, and 2/Lieut. S. D. Greenhalgh, M.C. took over command of "A" company. The march was resumed on December 10th, the Battalion proceeding to the area Mohiville-Scy-Scoville, 15 kilometres, Battalion headquarters being at Mohiville. On the 11th, Bonsin, 15 kilometres, was reached, companies being billeted also at Chardeneaux and Borlon. After this nearly all marches were made in bad weather on badly cut up roads, and billets became poor for some time. Filot, 14 kilometres, was reached on the 12th, and Werbomont, 15 kilometres, on the 13th, the Battalion being billeted over a wide area which included Bosson and Oufny.

A long march of 25 kilometres was made on the 14th to the village of Grand Hanneux, where the whole Battalion, except the headquarters officers mess was billeted in one building, the Johanninum Institute. A concert was given in this monastery on the evening of the 15th. The civilian element hereabouts was noticed to be more and more German in character as the Frontier was approached. On the 16th the next march was made, to Recht, 16 kilometres, in Germany, the Frontier being crossed at noon on that day at Poteau, the Battalion marching across the line to the strains of the Regimental March. It should be recorded here that the band and drums were called upon to play on the march daily for three weeks, often under difficult conditions, and they never failed to help the rest of the Battalion to keep up steadily. After the next day's march to Heppenbach, 12 kilometres, a halt was made, the column having out-distanced supplies, and the Battalion remained in that village, and in the neighbouring hamlets of Halenfeld and Valender till the 22nd, when it proceeded to Honsfeld, Haunnigen, 10 kilometres.

An opportunity was afforded during this halt for sport in the form of shooting. Many of the men succeeded in killing hares and a few deer were also obtained, which later formed a useful adjunct to the Christmas dinner. The services of a German woodsman were secured, and an attempt was made to secure a big boar which was in the vicinity, and although a pleasant time was spent the party only managed to give the boar a fright.

In this village, one or two Germans were met who had been with the battalions opposing us at Havrincourt, and it was interesting to learn their views of the great fight. From conversation with them it would appear that from that time the Germans realised that their defeat was inevitable.

On the 23rd, after a long march in the snow, the Battalion reached Hellenthal, 23 kilometres, and Kall was reached on Christmas Eve after a march, through picturesque hilly country, of 17 kilometres. In both these places billets were excellent. The last march was made in the morning of Christmas Day, when the Battalion reached its destination at Mechernich, 10 kilometres. A total distance of 287 kilometres, or approximately 180 miles, was covered since leaving Maubeuge on November 18th.

The marching had been excellent throughout and the behaviour of the men in friendly country beyond praise. The transport did capital work under difficult conditions throughout and a word of praise must be given to the motor lorry attached to the Battalion, which did capital work, the drivers being most willing to help.

At last the column had reached its destination. The men were billeted in the miners' small houses, and one could not help but compare the good behaviour, the tolerance and absence of acts of aggression, with what would have been had the situation been reversed. Fraternising was strongly deprecated, but any acts of animus were unknown. For two months the Battalion remained at Mechernich, and during this period it laid itself out to enjoy recreation and ease with just sufficient training to keep fit and ready. These days were one round of concerts, football matches and, when the frost came, ice hockey, tobogganing and similar sports, and, although the longing to get home was general, the time spent was most enjoyable.

One feature which will not be readily forgotten by those who participated therein was the officers "Hunt." The Meet was a wonderful sight. Riders and non-riders, were mounted on riding horses, draft horses, pack mules, and long-haired, long-legged draft mules—such was the turn out. Although there was no elusive fox to hunt, but only a couple of riders, these days provided fine sport for those taking, part and no little amount of fun for the spectators. Thus the days went round; the Battalion had fought well and now played well.

On February 18th, a draft of eight officers and 170 other ranks was transferred to the 15th Hampshire Regiment, and it was generally supposed that the Battalion was to be broken up and sent home as a cadre, a large number of men having been demobilised.

On February 23rd, however, the Battalion left Mechernich by train, proceeding to Wermelskirchen, where it relieved the 2nd Hampshire Regiment. In April the Battalion was transferred to the 3rd Southern Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier-General D. E. Cayley, C.B., C.M.G., and became a unit in the Army of the Rhine.

For nearly ten months the Battalion had been part of the 186th Infantry Brigade, in the 62nd Division. This division had made for itself, by its sheer hard fighting, a reputation second to none in the British Army. It may be fairly claimed that the Battalion had won a name, not inferior to that of any other unit even in the 62nd. Trained and hardened in India and Palestine, spared the trench warfare of the earlier years of the war, the Battalion, from the first day of the attack in the Ardre Valley, never looked back, but stood the test of the continuous fighting of the Advance, and emerged with a great reputation.

All ranks learned during this time to appreciate the quality of the division to which they had the honour of belonging: not only were they proud of its fighting reputation, but they had experienced the kindness and consideration of Divisional and Brigade Staffs in every branch of life in the field, and they had learned to look for that close attention to detail, whether in questions of rations, billets or amusements, which was shown by division and Brigade alike in their efforts to do all that was humanly possible for the fighting unit. Above all, they had come to honour and admire the G.O.C. Brigade, General Burnett—"The Brig.," as he was affectionately and generally known, whose constant encouragement and generous praise had a very large share in the Battalion's success.

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CHAPTER XIII.

The Battalion was now composed of retainable men from the 2nd and 2/4th Battalions and two complete companies from the 52nd Battalion. Headquarters and three companies were in Wermelskirchen, a large village 20 miles north-east of Cologne, and one company was on outpost duty at a picturesque spot known as Talsperre. The valley had been dammed and the accumulated water formed the supply for the surrounding district. Wooded slopes on either side completed the scene.

Here was the outpost barrier between Wermelskirchen and Remscheid, the latter a hotbed of Spartacism, and the chief duty was the prevention of smuggling. Trams run to and from the neutral zone, but not before the passengers had been made to show their passes and had been subjected to close scrutiny. Occasionally food was found, the unfortunate paterfamilias having attempted its concealment in a Gladstone bag under cover of darkness. Nothing escaped the sentries of the Battalion, who performed their duties with relish and zeal.

Emerson said "To the attentive eye each moment of the year has its own beauty," but many were of a different opinion when May presented herself for our enjoyment. Alternate showers of sleet and rain, the thermometer very little above freezing, and an almost total absence of the sun was more reminiscent of Flanders than anywhere else.

The villagers celebrated Labour Day with a solemn obstinacy, a procession numbering about 300 people marching down the main street, headed by a brass band. This was the first celebration allowed since the downfall of the Imperial Government which forbade it.

In the meantime Lieut.-Col. H. Sidney D.S.O., Northumberland Hussars, had taken over from Lieut.-Col. H. C. Westmorland, D.S.O., Hampshire Regiment, who assumed the duties of 2nd in command.

Training and education kept the men very busy as there was always the prospect of a further advance into Germany, should the Germans eventually refuse to sign the peace terms. Much of the time, however, was spent in wiring the perimeter of the occupied zone and in the construction of 30 yard ranges. When this wiring was eventually completed many more cases of smuggling were brought to light; foodstuffs and any material for trading purposes were not allowed to be taken into the neutral zone and thus was the blockade enforced. In this district, as elsewhere, are numerous woods and forests, and before the wire was erected it was easy for the local population, knowing the tracks, to slip past our sentries.

Football progressed very favourably for the Battalion and it was able to give a very good account of itself towards the end of the season. Thanks to football and cross-country running the Battalion kept very fit, a slight epidemic of German measles being the only blot on the bill of health.

June found the whole Battalion on outpost duty in glorious weather and the country looking a picture.

On June 17th a sports conference was suddenly converted into a council of war. The Battalion was to be relieved on the outpost line and was to form the advance guard if the Brigade was ordered to advance further into the country, in the case of Germany refusing to sign the peace terms.

The inhabitants thought that our advance would free the country of Spartacism and would be generally welcomed.

On June 19th the Battalion moved to the Brigade concentration area north-west of Wermelskirchen and billeted in the little village of Hungar, very pretty with its rose gardens and some very fine carnations. The billeting officer was forced to take over a school, and the children cheered him for his action. Church parade in the village caused quite a stir, and the inhabitants thoroughly appreciated our band.

Next morning, 23rd, orders were received to be ready to move forward at an hour's notice.

It was not till Sunday, June 29th, that the official news that peace had been signed reached the Battalion. The band played up and down the streets of Hungar, but otherwise there were no celebrations.

July 2nd found the Battalion moving back to its former positions and the inhabitants beaming at our return.

Mr. Asquith paid a visit to the Battalion on July 4th, and was very popular with the troops. He asked about the German beer and how smuggling was prevented. He was evidently impressed by the keenness of the sentries, and asked the name of the Battalion.

It has always been a matter for discussion whether it is more delightful to start for a holiday which one has fully earned, or to return home from one which has been thoroughly enjoyed. And so it was when the Battalion returned to Wermelskirchen in July.

Cricket was now in full swing, and the XI. earned quite a reputation during this and the succeeding months.

On Saturday, July 16th, Lieut.- General Sir Claude Jacob, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., commanding II. Corps, inspected the Battalion, after which he made a most complimentary address.

September found the Battalion on outpost duty again and feeling that a change of scenery would be beneficial. Officer's wives and families availed themselves of the opportunity of visiting the occupied zone and brightened an otherwise somewhat dull existence.

On October 31st the Battalion ceased to exist, and retainable men were sent to the 51st Battalion, the remainder being demobilised.

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA 2/4TH HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT.

Owing to the "Recommendation Book" having been lost when the Battalion was disbanded, it is feared that there may be errors and omissions in the following lists which have been compiled from the "London Gazette."

A list of honours won by officers and men, originally members of the Battalion, cannot be included in full, but the following are worthy of note :—

Victoria Cross awarded to Lieut. T. E. ADLAM,
Bedfordshire Regt.

Lieut. ADLAM served as Sergeant in the Battalion
1914—1915, proceeding to England from Quetta.

D.S.O. awarded to Lieut. R. C. DURNFORD,
1/4th Hampshire Regt.

M.C.'s awarded to Lieut. J. de C. HAMILTON,
Lieut. H. F. SCOTT-STOKES.

Both while serving with the 1/4th Hampshire Regt.

THE HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT

HONOURS AND AWARDS

FRANCE.

BAR TO DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.

Lieut.-Col. F. BROOK, D.S.O., M.C.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.

Capt. W. S. CAVE
2/Lieut. J. W. SHORLAND
Major B. E. T. PARSONS

BAR TO MILITARY CROSS.

2/Lieut. S. D. GREENHALGH, M.C.
2/Lieut. G. P. WHEELER, M.C.

MILITARY CROSS.

Capt. W. H. LEDGARD	2/Lieut. G. P. WHEELER
Capt. H. C. B. COTTAM	Capt. R. H. GOTELEE
2/Lieut. F. C. HOLBROOK	2/Lieut. T. TURNER
2/Lieut. S. D. GREENHALGH	2/Lieut. R. R. DEAR
2/Lieut. R. P. FENN	2/Lieut. W. G. YOUNG
Capt. W. BRIERLEY	2/Lieut. A. H. BARKER
2/Lieut. C. A. GADSBY	2/Lieut. E. M. NEIL
2/Lieut. H. BRYANT	2/Lieut. H. L. WILLSHER
Capt. C. P. BULLEY	2/Lieut. H. F. WHEELER
2/Lieut. L. H. LAINÉ	

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES OF 8TH NOVEMBER, 1918.

Capt. J. F. BENNETT.
Sergt. A. G. GARRETT.

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES.

Lt.-Col. F. BROOK, D.S.O., M.C.
Major B. E. T. PARSONS, D.S.O.
Capt. W. S. CAVE, D.S.O.
2/Lt. J. W. SHORLAND, D.S.O.
200294 Sergt. W. H. COUSINS
200304 C.-Q.-M.-S. D. E. MURPHY

BAR TO DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

200031 Sergt. T. H. HAMILTON, D.C.M.

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

202740 Corpl. F. BALDWIN
 200343 C.S.M. J. H. TILSON, M.M.
 201253 Sergt. C. SAMWAYS
 200305 Sergt. W. C. SHADWELL
 38473 Pte. F. T. STONE
 10161 L/C P. AYLING
 200031 Sergt. T. H. HAMILTON
 12856 Sergt. C. E. JARVIS, M.M.
 202609 Sergt. A. WILLIAMS, M.M.
 201105 C.S.M. H. DENNETT
 R.S.M. A. R. HUBBERT

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL.

200027 R.Q.M.S. S. PORTER
 200340 Sergt. A. G. GARRETT
 205460 Corpl. G. GATTRELL

BAR TO THE MILITARY MEDAL.

37635 Sergt. W. HOLLIS M.M.
 12856 Sergt. C. JARVIS M.M.
 33267 Corpl. S. TONGE, M.M.
 33560 Pte. F. A. E. TONKIN, M.M.
 205042 Corpl. T. CHARLTON, M.M.
 202473 Pte. G. H. CAWTE, M.M.

MILITARY MEDAL.

280378 Sergt. V. SANDY	55024 Pte. A. HOLLAND
205032 Corpl. C. W. HORNER	202648 Pte. HILLIER J.
21392 Sergt. F. HURFORD	200100 Sergt. G. MEADEN
7728 Corpl. W. C. MARSHALL	205050 Sergt. T. MOSCROP
200475 Corpl. J. TAYLOR	11617 L/Cpl. C. FALDER
17301 Pte. A. J. BOYES	201109 C.S.M. H. T. CHURCHER
38593 Pte. F. CAMPBELL	356621 L/Cpl. G. JAMESON
27705 Pte. E. FRAMPTON	200543 Corpl. J. R. DIGWEED
200212 Pte. J. P. GOSS	202444 Pte. T. CHARLTON
205069 Pte. J. HOGG	203041 Pte. J. AUSTIN
28799 Pte. E. F. LEVY	27630 Pte. H. HEWITT
33126 Pte. E. T. LEWINGTON	202423 Pte. J. A. EARLEY

200296	Pte. H. MAY	27928	Pte. J. BOX
20089	Corpl. J. H. MURRELL	202875	Pte. F. MANNOCK
201140	Pte. H. RIVERS	13714	L/Cpl. G. LANGSTON
54888	Pte. S. SEYMOUR	200613	Corpl. W. BONE
204988	L/Cpl. E. T. SIMS	202347	Corpl. J. J. HOPKINSON
27031	L/Cpl. G. STARR	205440	Pte. W. BUCKETT
44940	Pte. P. SULLIVAN	202427	Pte. A. E. KERVIL
28438	L/Cpl. J. I. TONKINSON	33267	L/Cpl. S. TONGE
19706	Sergt. H. G. HARRISON	202711	Pte. J. MITCHELL
202820	Sergt. N. J. TUCKER	201600	Pte. A. PARKER
205037	Corpl. C. A. ANGER	37635	Corpl. W. HOLLES
356847	Corpl. W. BROADLEY	200069	C.S.M. W. WALSH
40896	Corpl. E. G. BROGDEN	202586	Pte. S. SEEVIOIR
201332	Corpl. G. H. STEWART	17079	Pte. T. RAYBOULD
202524	Pte. S. A. BARFOOT	200315	Corpl. H. HIXON
201752	Pte. V. BENNETT	42296	L/Cpl. V. FORD
202836	Pte. F. C. BUDDEN	202473	Pte. G. H. CAWTE
55074	Pte. F. GLENISTER	201152	Sergt. A. E. BARNEY
201355	C.S.M. M. E. C. CORNEY	356839	Pte. F. MERSON
114417	Sergt. C. W. CAVELL	201339	Pte. S. BRANDON
200183	Sergt. LANSLOWNE	200757	Pte. J. ELLIS
200966	Sergt. C. PAINTING	202461	Pte. S. W. CLARKE
201193	Corpl. L. F. ARNOLD	201652	Pte. C. J. BANNING
201205	Corpl. E. E. HIGGINS	200343	C.S.M. J. H. TILSON
20570	Pte. A. B. ACKERMAN	201825	Pte. P. WEST
201630	L/Cpl. ADAMS	202815	Pte. F. TAPPENDEN
11227	Pte. S. BUSHELL	202428	Pte. A. G. STREET
201464	Pte. F. BUSHBY	8470	Pte. W. PURDU
202749	Pte. F. W. COOPER	306830	Sergt. G. REDMAN
40672	Pte. G. W. B. CUTHBERT	33560	Pte. F. TONKIN
202496	L/Cpl. J. KEARLEY	25199	Pte. A. E. KIBBY
200765	Pte. W. MEAGER	14031	L/Cpl. A. FOX
201824	L/Cpl. H. J. MOODY	44119	Pte. J. DOWIE
43613	Pte. G. H. PHILLIPS	202490	Pte. A. SHEATH
200897	Pte. A. F. PIPER	202746	L/Cpl. F. PURKIS
205099	Corpl. K. SPENCER	31551	Pte. T. BESSANT
35732	Corpl. STEVENS	45697	Pte. A. SELLARS
201459	Pte. E. STONE	45692	Pte. W. H. ROBINSON
202769	Pte. W. J. HAMPTON	40399	Pte. R. ELLIS
39011	Pte. A. KENNY	28235	Pte. A. DONSON
202792	Pte. H. G. NEWINGTON	26456	Pte. T. COLLINS
19186	Pte. P. NOLAN	18801	Sergt. W. STEERE, D.C.M.
45673	Pte. H. PICKARD	202746	Pte. D. CHAPMAN
201452	Pte. A. RICHARDSON	26454	Pte. T. W. COLLINS
203833	Pte. F. J. THRESHER	201090	Pte. H. DIGANCE

28714	Pte. A. VINCENT	14021	Pte. A. FOX
45716	Pte. W. J. WARD	8630	Pte. F. W. PURKISS
202609	Corpl. A. WILLIAMS	21480	Pte. J. F. SQUIRES
12334	L/Cpl. F. CHILDS	26566	Pte. W. R. SURRIDGE
12856	Sergt. C. JARVIS	20257	Pte. F. TRENT
202440	A/Corpl. R. A. KENT	9857	Sergt. A. E. GARDNER
31737	Pte. J. BLUNN	201136	Sergt. D. W. RAYMONT
201328	Sergt. A. GUNDRY	39033	Pte. S. HALL
201562	L/Cpl. F. J. ALLEN		

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DECORATIONS CONFERRED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

MEDAILLE MILITAIRE.

39003 Sergt. G. DUFFY.

CROIX DE GUERRE.

Lt.-Col. F. BROOK, D.S.O., M.C.

Capt. W. BRIERLEY, M.C.

200296 Pte. H. MAY, M.M.

8980 Pte JOHNSON, M.M.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Other ranks who left England with the Battalion on 12th December, 1914, and were present on 11th December, 1918.

200294	Sergt. COUSINS, W. H.	200644	Sergt. Dmr. JAMES, S.
201289	Corpl. COX, H.	201174	Pte. LAVERSUCH, G.
200988	Pte. DEEBTON, C. V.	200100	Sergt. MEADEN, G. M.M.
201149	Sergt. DIXON, A.	200871	Pte. OAKLEY, C.
201207	R.Q.M.S. EMBERTON, J. M.	201487	Pte. WESTBROOK, E.
201028	L/Cpl. GRIGG, E.	201283	C.S.M. SAMWAYS, C., D.C.M.
201108	Pte. HUTCHINGS, C.	200613	Sergt. BONE, W., M.M.

THE HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT
CASUALTIES IN FRANCE.

	KILLED				WOUNDED				MISSING	
	OFFICERS		O.R.		OFFICERS		O.R.		O.R.	
Ardre Valley	2	...	...	33	...	9	...	170	...	139
Vaux Vraucourt	1	...	...	19	...	2	...	121	...	2
Havrincourt	1	37	...	7	...	207	...	38
Marcoing	1	19	...	2	...	69	...	—
Solesmes	—	8	...	1	...	17	...	—
Le Quesnoy	—	19	...	2	...	70	...	2
	5			135		23		654		181

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This brochure is the result of collaboration of the following:

Lieutenant-Colonel F. BROOK, D.S.O., M.C.

Major B.E. T. PARSONS, D.S.O.

Captain R. P. FENN, M.C., Lieutenant H. P. B. HOARE, and others.

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